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National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*

Mauritania

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I. Description of methodology and general consultation process for the preparation of the report

1. This report, prepared for the second cycle of the universal periodic review, is the product of consultations between the interministerial technical committee responsible for preparing reports, parliamentarians, elected local government officials, judges, the National Human Rights Commission, civil society, trade unions and the Country Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in Mauritania.

2. It was subject to a consultation process that was initiated in February 2015 during a workshop attended by all stakeholders. Data were collected from the departments and institutions concerned. They were shared during meetings organized with parliamentarians and civil society organizations in June and July 2015. This report was approved on 14 July 2015 by an interministerial committee composed of all the departments and institutions concerned.

II. Country background and new developments since the previous review

3. Mauritania is a multi-ethnic and multicultural country. Its population is predominantly Arab and includes the Pulaar, Soninké and Wolof minority groups. There were 3,537,628 inhabitants in 2013, 27.1 per cent of whom live in Nouakchott, the country's administrative capital.[1]

4. Owing to its geopolitical and strategic position, the country faces multiple security and humanitarian challenges.

5. It has been battling recurring drought, which has an impact on its natural resources and poses a serious problem of food security, particularly in the *wilayas* (provinces) of Hodh Charghi, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba, Gorgol, Brakna, Tagant and Guidimagha.

6. As a transit and destination country for many migrants from sub-Saharan Africa and other regions, it also has to cope with a large influx of refugees, mostly Malians, who number 52,355 and have settled in the east of the country.

7. Despite these burdens, the country is making every effort to fulfil its international human rights obligations.

8. It has a decentralized and devolved administrative structure. This comprises several levels: *wilayas* (15), moughataas (sub-provinces) (55), districts (31) and municipalities (218).[2] These various entities contribute to the economic, social and political development of the country.

9. The judicial system is based on the principle of a double degree of jurisdiction (the same offence can be adjudicated both by a court of original jurisdiction and by an appellate court).

10. The Government has improved the efficiency of the justice system by making justice more accessible through the establishment of courts, including a court of appeal, in Aleg, two regional courts in Nouakchott North and South and a labour court in Zouerate. This new initiative also includes an anti-slavery court created in May 2015 by the Supreme Council of Justice and whose establishment is in the process of being approved by Parliament.

11. Moreover, improvements in the human, material and financial conditions of judicial personnel have led to a more efficient justice system.

12. The legal protection of human rights is guaranteed by the Constitutional Council and the national courts.

13. The Constitutional Council helps protect human rights by ensuring the constitutionality of laws. The Constitution gives the President of the Republic, the Speaker of the National Assembly, the President of the Senate, and one third of deputies or senators the power to appeal to the Constitutional Council to have a law declared unconstitutional. For example, the Council declared unconstitutional certain provisions of Act No. 2010-035 of 21 July 2010 on combating terrorism.

14. Defendants have the right to the presumption of innocence, to the principle of legality with regard to offences and punishment, and to prepare their legal defence. Article 4 of the bill criminalizing torture provides that all persons deprived of their liberty have the right to legal counsel from the time they are taken into custody and not at the last moment, as previously provided in the Code of Criminal Procedure, and the right to contact their family. Persons who are indigent have the right to be assisted by a court-appointed attorney.

15. The 2012 constitutional review led to significant improvements in the regulatory and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, including:

- Formal recognition of the cultural and linguistic diversity of the country;
- Definition of slavery and torture as crimes against humanity;
- According constitutional status to the National Human Rights Commission.

16. With a view to giving full effect to international human rights conventions, the country has a monistic constitutional system, which provides that such conventions, once ratified and published, have primacy over national law.

17. Since the 2010 review, Mauritania acceded, in 2012, to the:

- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

18. In 2015, it also acceded to the human rights instruments of the African Union to which it was not already a party.

The institutional framework for human rights

19. The promotion and protection of human rights has been enhanced since 2010 through the establishment of new institutions.

1. The High Council for Fatwa and Administrative Appeals

20. Established by decree No. 2012-134 of 24 May 2012, the Council reports to the Office of the President and enjoys financial autonomy. It gives advice on legal matters relating to sharia (Islamic law) that are of general interest, which are referred to it or taken up on the initiative of its president. It has the power to issue fatwas (opinions of Muslim jurists) and to revise, correct and publish them.

21. It examines complaints submitted by citizens, and may refer them directly to the public authorities and sectors concerned. It helps resolve conflicts between members of the public and local governments.

2. TADAMOUN

22. TADAMOUN, a national agency established in March 2013, is responsible for:

- Identifying the consequences of slavery and proposing programmes to eradicate them and to ensure the implementation of such programmes, in consultation with other stakeholders concerned with the issue;
- Ensuring the design, coordination, implementation and monitoring of programmes to integrate returnees into active life;
- Promoting and implementing programmes to combat poverty.

23. The Agency may exercise the rights granted to civil parties relating to any acts constituting an offence prosecuted and punished under Act No. 2007-048 of 3 September 2007 criminalizing slavery and punishing slavery-like practices. It has brought civil actions in the following cases, which are still pending:

- Choueiba case RP 18/2014 in Zouerate;
- Vreikine case RP 72/2015 in Zouerate;
- Issa ould Hemed case RP 35/2015 in Nema;
- Lalla and Knatha mint Mahmoud case RP 67/2015 in Nema;
- Mabrouka mint Mahmoud case RP 33/2015 in Nema.

3. National Preventive Mechanism on torture

24. The mission of the National Preventive Mechanism is to prevent torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment in places of detention. It enjoys administrative and financial autonomy and does not receive instructions from any authority. Its composition reflects a de facto pluralism that ensures the involvement of all stakeholders (Bar Association, Medical Association, human rights organizations, universities, and private individuals). The bill on the National Preventive Mechanism is before Parliament awaiting adoption.

4. National case law: cases of slavery, torture and rape[3]

25. With regard to slavery, 31 cases of slavery-like practices have been dealt with by the courts, including 8 in Nouakchott and 23 in the *wilayas* of Hodh El Gharbi, Hodh Charghi, Tiris Zemour, Dakhlet Nouadhibou, Trarza, Gorgol and Adrar. The sentences imposed in these cases included imprisonment (2-year term), probation, a fine (200,000 ouguiyas (UM)) and civil damages for victims (UM 600,000).

26. As for torture, in its decision No. 108 of 7 March 2012, the criminal court of Nouakchott sentenced eight members of the National Guard to prison terms of 1 to 4 years for having tortured two detainees.

27. The statistics on rape recorded by the prosecutor's office at the court in the *wilaya* of Nouakchott are: 45 cases in 2013; 39 cases in 2014; and 15 cases in 2015. The sentences handed down ranged between 10 and 20 years' imprisonment.

5. National human rights institutions

28. These comprise the National Human Rights Commission, which was granted A status accreditation for national human rights institutions in 2011, and the Ombudsman.

6. Scope of international obligations

29. The Government published in a special edition of the Official Gazette, No. 1326 bis of 9 December 2014, the main international human rights legal instruments that Mauritania has ratified, with the support of the OHCHR Country Office. The instruments published are:

- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
- Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

30. The purpose of this measure is to foster compliance with the international instruments ratified by Mauritania and make it easier for parties to invoke these instruments before the national courts.

III. Promotion and protection of human rights on the ground

Work of national institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

1. Work of the National Human Rights Commission

31. As part of its awareness-raising efforts, the Commission, with the support of the UNDP-Japan project and the Spanish cooperation agency, carried out the following activities:

- Training in international humanitarian law;
- Training of members and staff of the National Human Rights Commission in the Paris Principles, with the support of the OHCHR Country Office;
- Seminars on migrants' rights for law enforcement, security and elected local officials;

- Study visits on conflict management and prevention for staff and some members of the Commission;
- Strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and Commission members and staff on land, forestry and environmental legislation;
- Awareness-raising among NGOs and the decentralized government services on conflict prevention;
- Radio and television broadcasts to promote opposition to slavery-like practices.

32. The National Human Rights Commission played an active role in lobbying for the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and worked for the establishment of the national preventive mechanism on torture.

33. The Commission has regularly sent missions to places of detention in Nouakchott, on average twice per month, and inland, six times during 2014. It has consistently called for improvements in detention conditions, particularly with regard to bedding, food and medical care.

34. Its recommendations on prison overcrowding had a significant impact on the transfer of detainees to the new prisons in Aleg and Nouadhibou. They also helped reduce the number of remand prisoners by 50 per cent.

2. Work of the Ombudsman

35. Between 2010 and 2014, the Ombudsman received 887 complaints against the public authorities, 765 of which were declared admissible and 414 were settled out of court. Of the remaining complaints, 284 are still being considered and are progressing well. The Ombudsman's intervention prompted the authorities to act upon 67 decisions by the courts in favour of public service users.

3. Work of the High Council for Fatwa and Administrative Appeals

36. In 2014, the Council received 40 complaints against public authorities, including 12 ministerial departments. It dealt with 11 complaints against the military and paramilitary sectors and 15 against other institutions. Most of the complaints were lodged by individuals.

4. Work of civil society organizations

37. The regular participation of civil society organizations in national, regional and international meetings in the field of human rights was supported by the public authorities and technical and financial partners.

38. Civil society organizations prepare independent, alternative reports, alongside those submitted by the Government. More specifically, they are involved in:

- Combating human rights violations;
- Providing direct assistance to victims;
- Promoting compliance with human rights legislation;
- Promoting knowledge of and respect for human rights.

39. Civil society organizations visit different prisons to observe detention conditions. Their involvement includes broad representation in national institutions responsible for good governance and the promotion of human rights. Thus they constitute the majority of members of the National Human Rights Commission and the National Commission for Extractive Industries Transparency. The also sit on the sectoral committees responsible for the implementation of the various strategies.

40. Policies relating to children's rights are implemented with civil society involvement, especially with regard to children at risk and/or with special needs.

41. Civil society organizations have helped refer women in family conflicts to relevant organizations and raise awareness of the Personal Status Code and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women; they have also helped women in such situations obtain places in shelters for victims of violence.

42. They have also helped to publicize the fatwa prohibiting female genital mutilation (FGM), to raise awareness, and have assisted in national campaigns to promote "zero tolerance for FGM" and combat early marriages.

43. Organizations dealing with persons with disabilities have received training on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol.

44. In this context, a joint commission has been established, composed of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family and the Mauritanian Federation of National Associations of Persons with Disabilities.

5. Cooperation with international mechanisms

45. The Government has cooperated effectively with the various international human rights mechanisms by ratifying important legal instruments, presenting some of its reports to the treaty bodies and agreeing to all requests by Special Rapporteurs to visit the country.

Ratification of international legal instruments

46. In 2012, Mauritania acceded to several international human rights legal instruments, as noted in the introduction.

Presentation of reports before the treaty bodies

47. In order to strengthen cooperation with the treaty bodies, the Government presented its reports to the Committee against Torture and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 2012, the Human Rights Committee in 2013 and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in 2014. It has submitted its combined third to fifth reports under the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

48. A follow-up report on the priority recommendations of the Human Rights Committee was prepared and transmitted to that committee in October 2014.

49. To address the delay in the submission of reports to the treaty bodies, the Government established an interministerial technical committee responsible for preparing reports and the follow-up to recommendations. In order to enable Mauritania to meet its obligations as a State party, the committee drew up a work plan for 2015, which is currently being implemented.

Visits by Special Rapporteurs

50. Between 2010 and 2015, Mauritania responded favourably to all requests for visits under the special procedures of the Human Rights Council. As a result, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia and related intolerance visited the country in 2011 and 2014, respectively. The Government also agreed to the request submitted in 2015 by the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent.

Implementation of the recommendations of international human rights mechanisms

51. The Government, in collaboration with the OHCHR country office in Mauritania, has carried out several awareness-raising activities relating to the recommendations made to the country by the treaty bodies, Special Rapporteurs and the UPR Working Group. It has also overseen the implementation of the accepted recommendations. To this end, it has begun the process of developing an action plan for monitoring implementation of the recommendations.

IV. Follow-up to the previous review

This section deals with implementation of the recommendations formulated during the first review, broken down into the following thematic areas.

1. Women's rights

52. The general reservation formulated by Mauritania upon accession to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was withdrawn by letter No. Mismaur/236/KH/BB/14, dated 3 July 2014, addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. This reservation has been replaced by specific reservations concerning articles 13 (b) and 16 of the Convention.

53. A national strategy for gender mainstreaming, incorporating the provisions of the Convention, was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 5 March 2015. Its aim is to integrate gender in all public policies in order to guarantee the advancement of women and gender equity. It has two lines of approach:

- Horizontal integration of gender in all public policies and sectoral programmes;
- Vertical integration of the empowerment of women and efforts to combat stereotypes and gender-based violence. This also includes issues that are not covered by other departments.

54. A draft framework law on combating violence against women is under preparation in accordance with the action plan on implementation of the road map on eradication of contemporary forms of slavery. This proposed legislation defines and criminalizes rape.

55. Establishing a national commission to combat gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation (FGM), which has an advisory and guidance role; establishing regional and departmental committees in areas where there is a high prevalence rate; establishing a unit to combat gender-based violence, including female genital mutilation; implementing standard operating procedures which lead to an improved response and holistic care for survivors of gender-based violence; implementing an action plan for voluntary cessation of FGM in seven *wilayas* in the country.

56. Strengthening the gender perspective in the various updates of the strategic framework for poverty reduction (2011-2015), which gives prominence to the advancement of women and gender equity.

57. With the support of various financial partners the Government has implemented a number of economic programmes that promote the economic empowerment of women. For example, the Nissa Banks, the Women's Savings and Loan Group (GFEC), the Savings and Loan Bank (CAPEC), the Development and Savings Bank (CDD) and the sustainable development programme for oases. Regional and local savings and loan banks and mutual associations have also been set up to support women in their areas of operation.

58. With respect to the political participation of women, significant progress has been made by:

- Drawing up a national slate of 20 women for election as members of parliament;
- Drawing up a national slate of 20 seats and a slate of 18 seats at Nouakchott, alternately composed of men and women (one man, one woman);
- Increasing the number of constituencies having three seats to fill, at least one of which must be reserved for a female candidate.

59. The parliamentary elections of November 2013 resulted in an increase in the number of women elected to the National Assembly to 22.4 per cent, as against 19 per cent in 2006, and in the local elections to 35.58 per cent, compared with 30 per cent in 2006. In the Senate, women represent 18 per cent, as against 16 per cent in 2006.

60. In rural areas, a plan of action for the advancement of women aimed at promoting their rights, improving their health and their access to education and employment, and strengthening the capacities of the structures established for their development is being implemented.

61. Family policy was updated in 2013 to reflect the central role of mother and child. The Government has established family dispute units in all *wilayas*.

62. Awareness-raising sessions on the Personal Status Code and on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women are regularly presented in the media.

63. Family dispute services registered and dealt with 5,440 family disputes between 2010 and 2014 of which 3,357 were related to child welfare.

64. The adoption of Act No. 2012-003 of 1 February 2012, repealing and replacing some provisions in Act No. 61-016 of 30 January 1961, which established the rules governing civilian pensions under Mauritania's Retirement Fund, as amended by Act No. 65-074 of 11 April 1965, has corrected a provision involving discrimination against women by introducing the right to survivors' benefits for widows and children.

65. Act No. 2014-032 of 31 December 2014 adjusted to 60 the pensionable age for women employed under a collective bargaining agreement.

2. Rights of the child

66. Concerning the protection and promotion of the rights of the child, the following measures have been taken:

- Implementation of a national child protection strategy;
- Drafting of a plan of action to combat child labour with the support of ILO, adopted by the Council of Ministers on 31 March 2015, the goal of which is to contribute to the elimination of all forms of child labour;
- Establishing regional councils in 10 *wilayas* to deal with child protection issues, in particular those affecting children with disabilities.

67. Establishing a plan of action for voluntary cessation of FGM in *wilayas* where the practice is widespread.

68. Adoption of a national strategy for the cessation of FGM with the aim of creating a national plan for promoting voluntary and permanent cessation of the practice of female genital cutting/mutilation by means of formal and public statements.

69. Its aim is to:

- Create an institutional environment that is favourable to the promotion of voluntary and formal cessation of female genital cutting/mutilation;
- Strengthen the capacity of stakeholders;
- Design an integrated communication plan for the elimination of FGM;
- Promote action research leading to the design and implementation of more targeted measures.

70. Special attention is paid to early childhood, as reflected in the following measures:

- Creation of a national council on children;
- Promotion of nurseries and kindergartens;
- Provision of equipment and supplies on a yearly basis for 8 public kindergartens in Nouakchott and 40 kindergartens in the *wilayas* of the two Hodhs, Assaba, Gorgol, Brakna, Tagant and Guidimagha;
- Conducting a "train the trainers" programme for preschool teachers;
- Including a module on preschool education in the national programme for development of the education sector;
- Continuing training for 200 kindergarten teachers each year;
- Recruitment of 60 schoolteachers by the State in 2013;
- Conversion of schools for deaf and blind children into public administrative institutions.

3. Torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

71. The prevention of torture constitutes a priority for the Government. Thus, on 26 February 2015, it adopted a bill that introduced a national preventive mechanism on torture in accordance with the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, to which it acceded in 2012.

72. Awareness-raising training seminars have been organized for law enforcement officers on the subject of prohibition of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

73. Workshops on police custody and the suppression of torture were organized in 2012 by the Ministry of Justice for the benefit of magistrates and criminal investigation officers.

74. The administrative and judicial authorities have a duty to systematically undertake investigations as soon as an allegation of torture is made. The penalties are those set out under Act No. 2013.011 of 23 January 2013 on the prosecution of crimes of torture and slavery as crimes against humanity.

75. Furthermore, the National Human Rights Commission and the International Committee of the Red Cross are authorized to make unannounced visits to places of detention.

4. Eradication of the consequences of slavery and trafficking in persons

76. Eradicating the consequences of slavery and contemporary forms of slavery is a priority for action by the Government. To this end, on 6 March 2014, it adopted a road map for the eradication of contemporary forms of slavery and established an interministerial committee chaired by the Prime Minister with a brief to implement the recommendations of the road map together with a technical committee for follow-up.

77. The OHCHR country office in Mauritania participates as an observer in this committee, along with representatives of ministries, of the National Human Rights Commission and of civil society organizations.

78. An action plan for implementation of the road map was adopted on 30 September 2014 and the following action was taken:

- Adoption by the Council of Ministers of a bill repealing and replacing Act No. 048/2007 criminalizing slavery and providing penalties for slavery-like practices, which grants NGOs the right to intervene as a third party in court proceedings;
- The commemoration on 6 March each year of the national day to address the legacy of slavery;
- The introduction of a cash transfer programme to help finance the enrolment of school-age children from poor families and/or those affected by the legacy of slavery;
- Approval of a plan of action to combat child labour;
- The development of educational infrastructures (schools, boarding schools) in priority education zones;
- Organization of awareness-raising campaigns to mobilize opposition to slavery;
- Holding workshops for civil society organizations and the media on anti-slavery legislation;
- The promulgation of a fatwa, on 27 March 2015, by the Association of Ulemas, on the illegitimacy of the practice of slavery;
- The initiation by the national agency TADAMOUN of income-generating projects for the benefit of those affected by the legacy of slavery.

79. In 2013, the national agency TADAMOUN received funding from the national budget in the amount of UM 2.8 billion or $9.7 million in order to carry out these programmes.

80. Thanks to this funding, it has been possible to carry out projects in education, vocational training, health, water, agriculture, livestock farming, fisheries, environment, affordable housing and small trades, particularly in priority areas (Adwabas). In addition, the agency is authorized to intervene as a third party in criminal proceedings in cases involving slavery.

81. TADAMOUN carried out the following activities in 2014 as part of efforts to eradicate the consequences of slavery:

- Construction of 20 comprehensive schools in the *wilayas* of Hodh Chargui, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba, Brakna, Tagant, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Trarza and Adrar;
- Construction of 20 school canteens (one for each comprehensive school);
- Construction of seven mosques and seven mahadras;
- Drilling of 16 boreholes and installation of 9 drinking water supply systems;
- Deepening of 14 wells and river water treatment in the *wilayas* of Trarza, Gorgol, Brakna and Guidimakha;
- Building and equipping 20 health centres in the *wilayas* of Hodh Charghi, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba, Brakna, Tagant, Gorgol, Guidimakha and Adrar;

- Construction of 1,159 social housing units at Nouadhibou and 1,000 social housing units in rural areas;
- Purchase of 1,500 animal-drawn ploughs for farmers;
- Construction of 12 dams in the *wilayas* of Hodh Charghi, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba, Brakna, Tagant, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Trarza and Adrar;
- Digging of 500 dykes and ditches in the *wilayas* of Hodh Charghi, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba, Brakna, Tagant, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Trarza and Adrar;
- Supplying 46 tons of seed in the *wilayas* of Hodh Charghi, Hodh El Gharbi, Assaba, Brakna, Tagant, Gorgol, Guidimakha, Trarza and Adrar;
- Development of 500 hectares in key localities in some *wilayas* (not including Nouakchott);
- Distribution of 2,400 three-wheelers to economic interest groupings in collaboration with the urban community and the administrative authorities of Nouakchott.

82. An action plan to combat trafficking in persons in all its forms is being drawn up by the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action.

5. Prisons and conditions of detention

83. Improving living conditions in prisons is a constant concern of the Government, which attaches particular importance to respect for the minimum rules for detention. The focus of the public authorities is on inspection of prisons and improvement of the sanitary conditions in prisons, the nutritional status of prisoners and recreational facilities.

84. Prison inspections are carried out by the inspectorate of prisons of the Courts and Prisons Administration. The Department of Criminal Justice and Prisons Administration carries out internal inspections which supplement inspections on safety conditions. Finally, the prison commission monitors the legal situation of inmates, health, food and the conditions of detention.

85. Conditions of detention have been improved by the Department of Justice in cooperation with the competent ministries, which have made adjustments with respect to equipment, finance and personnel in order to create the necessary conditions for detainees to serve their sentences in dignity.

6. Ratification of and harmonization with international conventions and relations with the mechanisms

86. In order to give greater publicity to the universal periodic review and follow-up to its recommendations, several meetings (seminars and workshops) have been organized, in partnership between the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action and the OHCHR country office in Mauritania.

87. With a view to bringing national legislation into line with ratified international conventions, the Government published in the Official Gazette the laws relating to the main covenants and conventions that have been ratified by Mauritania.

88. A database on alignment of national laws with the provisions of the international conventions will be established with a view to amending laws that are not in conformity with ratified international instruments and enacting laws that will achieve the harmonization that is sought. Bills on torture, gender-based violence, criminalization of slavery and the national preventive mechanism on torture are currently before parliament.

7. Anti-corruption efforts

89. With a view to efficient management of public resources, the following actions have been carried out:

- Implementation of a national anti-corruption strategy;
- Finalization of a general framework for reform of management of public finances and a related medium-term operational plan;
- Implementation of sectoral anti-corruption action plans.

8. Freedom of non-Muslims to practise their religion

90. Foreign nationals are free to practise their religion without restriction. There are churches in several towns, where foreigners are free to hold religious services.

9. Food security and poverty eradication

91. Implementation of the Strategic Framework for Poverty Eradication (phase III) led to the achievement of a growth rate of 6.7 per cent.

92. The national strategy on food security and the strategy for the rural sector helped to increase the resilience of vulnerable populations.

93. The aim is to make growth more inclusive, to reduce inequality and to promote sustainable solutions to the problem of food security and the emergence of a modern and competitive agricultural sector.

94. These strategies have made it possible to:

- Increase the area under rice cultivation to 55,000 hectares in 2015, as against 18,000 hectares in 2009, thereby enabling the country to meet 86 per cent of its rice requirements, compared with 35 per cent in 2009;
- Supply markets with agricultural inputs at subsidized prices that are 45 per cent less than the cost price and distribute fertilizer free of charge to village cooperatives;
- Carry out a land reform focusing on irrigated land;
- Initiate a process to make agricultural insurance available and a programme for strengthening and upgrading the seed supply chain;
- Grant developed farmland to women's cooperatives;
- Cancel more than UM10 billion in farmers' debt so that they are able to make a contribution to the development of the sector[4];
- Finance agricultural projects undertaken by unemployed graduates;
- Improve, for the first time in the history of the country, more than 9,729 hectares, using the Government's own resources, and distribute the improved land to 3,341 families from the most vulnerable rural population groups (Beguemoune, Dakhle, Beylane, Aéré M'bar etc.);
- Simplify the procedure and formalities for acquiring ownership of irrigated land in rural areas and reduce the associated costs;
- Provide agricultural equipment (65 combine harvesters, 135 tractors), at reduced cost, to 48 collective economic interest groupings (GIE) from the most disadvantaged segments of society;

- Distribute fertilizer free of charge to village cooperatives and subsidize agricultural inputs for other producers;
- Support women's cooperatives engaged in market gardening (free provision of water pumping equipment, inputs and gardening tools);
- Strengthen the Food Security Watch technically and financially;
- Set up a network of village food reserves comprising 4,439 grain banks;
- Supply 105 collective feeding centres for malnourished children under 5 years of age and for nursing mothers and pregnant women;
- Distribute supplementary feeding for 9,600 children attending the 233 kindergartens in 7 *wilayas*;
- Provide nutrition, health, psychosocial, educational and vocational training services through a child protection and social rehabilitation centre for 457 children from deprived backgrounds, 31 of whom had no family support;
- Conduct an awareness-raising programme for 22,548 women on reproductive health, breast-feeding and prevention of malaria;
- Monitor and screen 18,000 children under 5 years of age in community feeding centres;
- Deworm 12,348 children;
- Transfer 1,854 malnourished children to care facilities;
- Assist 52,000 individuals in 700 feeding centres, managed in cooperation with the World Food Programme;

95. The Emel (hope) programme, established in 2012 and funded by the State budget at a cost of approximately UM 30 billion, has guaranteed the operation of 1,124 shops. The shops are situated in areas where 225,000 families live; 1,125,000 people have thus benefited daily from a reliable supply of food at reduced prices.

96. The distribution free of charge in 2014 of 11,051 tons of food to 137,240 households representing some 823,440 persons.[5]

97. The livestock sector is one of the pillars of the national economy. It generates 12 per cent of GDP, ensures self-sufficiency in red meat and 30 per cent of milk needs. Comprehensive management by the State of genetic and health improvements in livestock and the construction of facilities for artificial insemination have boosted milk production and led to the opening of a milk-processing plant at Nema; additional plants are under construction at the sheep pens located in Bénichab and Boghé.

98. These measures, which are aimed at food self-sufficiency, have had a positive impact, enabling the country to meet its needs for foodstuffs and meat and dairy products despite population growth and irregular rainfall.

99. Since 2009, they have especially helped the poorest of the poor, in particular people affected by the legacy of slavery and those living in rural areas in general.

100. The Government's efforts to promote food security and the eradication of poverty were recognized by the international community in 2014, in the form of an award from FAO for achievement of the Millennium Development Goal target on food security and poverty eradication.

101. With respect to social housing,[6] we note the following:

- Urban redevelopment has transformed the shanty towns in Nouakchott, Nouadhibou, Rosso and Kaédi;

- 600 housing units were built in Zouerat;
- 2,600 households were identified in connection with the operation to resettle the people living in Kebba (outlying district of Wharf);
- 1,159 social housing units were built in Nouadhibou;
- A strategy for the development of local building materials was finalized.

Support from donors

102. The World Food Programme has given food and nutritional assistance to vulnerable populations in eight *wilayas*. It supports the Commission on Food Security in monitoring and evaluation and in conducting household surveys on food security;

103. The Italian cooperation agency supported 78 microprojects relating to hydroponics infrastructure;

104. Japan, for its part, funded projects of the Commission on Food Security in 2014 in the amount of 4.5 dollars.

105. Other partners (FAO, World Bank, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, Islamic Development Bank) provide assistance for the strengthening of food security.

10. Repatriation of Mauritanian refugees from Senegal

106. The repatriation operation entailed the organization of 106 convoys and the return of 24,536 persons, who were distributed among 5,817 families in 118 specially adapted sites in 5 provinces (*wilayas*) of the country (Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha and Assaba).[7]

107. Significant measures have been taken to facilitate the economic and social reintegration of the returnees, including:

- Construction of basic facilities (schools, health stations, markets, mosques, boreholes, dykes and embankments) and improvements to farmland;
- Financing of microprojects and income-generating activities;
- Reintegration of former civil servants and contract staff employed by the Government;
- The distribution of land for residential purposes, etc.;
- Registration of returnees by the National Population Registry Agency at special reception centres set up for returnees in the *wilayas* of Trarza, Brakna, Gorgol, Guidimakha and Assaba, and issuance of birth certificates on the basis of the Civil Status Census.

108. In the course of this operation, a database was compiled, civil status documents were issued to 21,960 returnees and a committee of returnee representatives was established to rule on pending cases.

109. The completion of the repatriation operation was marked by a ceremony on 25 March 2012 in Rosso attended by the President of the Republic and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

110. The programmes initiated by the National Agency for the Reception and Integration of Refugees are now being conducted by TADAMOUN.

11. Commemoration of National Reconciliation Day

111. The day of national reconciliation is celebrated on 25 March each year.

112. To mark this important event, the organizations representing the victims of the repression organize activities in partnership with the national institutions concerned (such as the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action, TADAMOUN and the National Human Rights Commission).

113. In 2009, the day of national reconciliation in Kaédi was marked by an acknowledgement of the State's responsibility for the events that took place, a request for forgiveness, the saying of a prayer in memory of the victims and the disbursement of compensation to their dependants.

12. Health

114. Reducing maternal and neonatal mortality is one of the major pillars of the country's public health policy.

115. The main health indicators are as follows:

- Availability of health-care coverage within a 5 km radius stands at 79 per cent;
- The mortality rate of children under 5 stands at 114 per 1,000 live births;
- The maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births stands at 626;
- The contraception rate stands at 14 per cent;
- The proportion of births assisted by a qualified practitioner stands at 56 per cent.

116. The State has taken significant measures to improve the health of the population and to reduce maternal and infant mortality, including:

- Creation of training schools for health-care personnel (Nema, Aioun, Kiffa, Kaédi, Sélibaby, Rosso);
- Expansion of health-care coverage and improvements in the quality of and access to services;
- Construction of health-care facilities;
- Redeployment of personnel to outlying areas;
- Revamping of the office responsible for procurement of medicines and supplies;
- Establishment of an institute for viral diseases;
- Creation of a sectoral coordination unit in 2012 to accelerate progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals related to health.

117. The aforementioned measures yielded the following results:

- A rise in the rate of prenatal consultations from 65.25 per cent in 2012 to 67.7 per cent in 2013;
- An increase in the use of contraception to 5.11 per cent in 2013, as against 4.31 per cent in 2012;
- An increase in the anti-tuberculosis (BCG) immunization coverage of children under 1 year from 86.56 per cent in 2012 to 91 per cent 2013; polio 3 immunization coverage increased from 77.7 per cent in 2012 to 78 per cent in 2013; immunization coverage for the pentavalent vaccine increased from 78.42 per cent in 2012 to 79.31 per cent in 2013; and varicella (chickenpox) immunization coverage increased from 69.65 per cent in 2012 to 73 per cent in 2013.[8]

118. Acting through the National Health Insurance Fund, the Government has increased health insurance coverage, extended coverage to diseases requiring treatment abroad and reined in health spending.

119. As at 31 December 2014, the number of persons covered by national health insurance stood at 356,873. This increase is attributable to the extension of health insurance to employees of public institutions, State-owned companies, privately owned companies, retirees having worked for those entities and their dependants.

120. In order to reduce maternal and infant mortality, efforts have been deployed in the following areas:

(a) Human resources

- Recruitment of 840 staff across all categories in 2014;
- Roll-out of a new database, together with measures for a staff restructuring;
- Availability of continuing education, the retraining of staff and the training of specialists abroad;
- Training of 14 temporary laboratory technicians; 25 ultrasound technicians; 60 staff specialized in the integrated management of childhood illness in Nouakchott; and 120 staff specialized in basic emergency obstetric and newborn care;

(b) Health-care facilities

- Construction of the Sélibaby School of Public Health, the children's wing of the Mother and Child Hospital, 13 health centres, 21 health stations and 2 hospitals in Kaédi and Boghé;
- Start of construction work on two hospitals, in Kiffa and Nema, each with a capacity of 150 beds;
- Refurbishing of premises intended for use by the haemodialysis services in the hospitals of Rosso, Zouerat, Kaédi, Aleg, Tidjikja, Akjoujt and Atar;
- Increasing the capacity of the dialysis centres of four hospitals (the National Hospital of Nouakchott and the hospitals in Sélibaby, Aioun and Kiffa) by adding 26 generators, two treatment rooms and dialysis beds;
- Setting up dialysis centres in all hospitals located in the provincial capitals;
- Improving the technical facilities of health centres.

(c) Medicines

The Government has taken significant measures to assure the quality of the medicines used, including:

- Granting the monopoly to import medicines, particularly antibiotics, psychotropic drugs and medicines for the treatment of diabetes, to the Medicines and Medical Equipment and Supplies Procurement Centre;
- Creating two points of entry for medicines at the airport and the autonomous port of Nouakchott;
- Requiring pharmacies to comply with applicable standards;
- Purchasing 345,000 long-lasting insecticidal mosquito nets;
- Purchasing 500,000 rapid diagnostic test kits for malaria.

13. The right to education

121. With the aim of guaranteeing effective enjoyment of the right to education, education is free and compulsory for all children of school age.

122. Significant efforts have been made in this area:

Basic level

123. The number of children with access to schooling increased from 535,976 in 2010/11 to 552,591 in 2011/12, and then from 568,953 in 2012/13 to 592,249 in 2013/14, representing an annual average growth rate of 4.1 per cent.

124. The number of classrooms increased over the same period from 14,174 in 2011/12 to 15,200 in 2012/13. Meanwhile, the number of basic schools reached 4,290 in 2014, compared to 3,682 in 2010.

125. The gross intake rate, which measures the system's capacity to accommodate children in the first year of basic education, rose from 105.3 per cent in 2010/11 to 108 per cent in 2011/12, and from 119 per cent in 2012/13 to 122 per cent in 2013/14.

126. A gender-based analysis shows that the gross intake rate for girls is higher than the rate for boys.

127. The gross enrolment ratio, which measures the total capacity of the system, rose from 98.7 per cent in 2012/13 to 100.9 per cent in 2013/14, representing a 2.2 point increase. As in the case of the gross intake rate, a gender-based analysis of the gross enrolment ratio indicates that the ratio has been higher for girls than for boys over the last three years across the different provinces. Thus, the parity index is greater than or equal to unity.

128. Basic education retention capacity was a major priority during the first phase of the National Development Programme for the Education Sector. An increase of 12.1 percentage points was registered during the implementation period for phase one of the National Development Programme (2001-2010), during which time the rate increased from 46.5 per cent to 58.6 per cent.

129. The basic education completion rate decreased from 73.66 per cent in 2010 to 73.08 per cent in 2011, and then to 70.24 per cent in 2012 before rising to 72.58 per cent in 2013; in 2014, the rate fell to 72 per cent.

Secondary level

130. The progress made in basic education has placed a great strain on secondary education. The Government is responding to this challenge by recruiting more teachers and building more educational facilities.

131. Between 2012 and 2014, the number of educational institutions increased from 402 to 485. The number of students rose from 151,454 in 2011/12 to 171,265 in 2012/13 and then to 177,267 in 2013/14, representing a growth rate of 8 per cent over that period.

132. The transition rate between the sixth year of basic education and the first year of secondary education increased from 36.7 per cent in 2010 to 51.9 per cent in 2014, representing an average annual growth of 3.8 points over that period. The analysis of this indicator reveals marked disparities between regions and between girls and boys. Accordingly, the Government has attached considerable importance to the construction of schools in rural areas.

133. In 2013 and 2014, the gross enrolment ratio at the lower secondary level stood at 37.6 per cent and 38 per cent, respectively. The national gross enrolment ratio at the

upper secondary level stood at 21.5 per cent in 2014, compared to 20.90 per cent in 2013, 18.98 per cent in 2012, 14.32 per cent in 2011 and 15.09 per cent in 2010.

134. A programme establishing education priority zones has been introduced with the aim of achieving universal primary enrolment. The programme targets the rural and impoverished areas where the out-of-school and dropout rates are considered to be too high.

Tertiary level

135. There have been substantial quantitative and qualitative changes in higher education since 2010. Several higher education institutions have been created, namely the University of Science, Technology and Medicine; the University of Islamic Sciences, the Polytechnic Institute, the National Institute of Public Works, the School of Mining, the Naval Academy, and the Higher Institute of Languages, Translation and Interpreting.

136. The opening of the new university campus in 2014, which includes, in addition to two universities and two higher education institutes, a university library and a distance-learning centre, will improve the quality of instruction.

137. In the area of governance, academic freedom has been strengthened by providing for the election of members of the establishments' decision-making bodies and faculty deans, and the appointment of university presidents on the basis of a competitive selection process.

138. Equal access to higher education is guaranteed by article 57 of Act No. 2010-043 of 21 July 2010 on higher education and scientific research.

139. Positive discrimination in favour of women is provided for in the regulations in force. Under the decree passed on 26 September 2011, 6 per cent of overseas scholarships are to be reserved for girls.

140. In order to consolidate these achievements, the year 2015 was declared the Year of Education.

V. Achievements, best practices, challenges and constraints in the implementation of recommendations

A. Achievements and best practices

141. In 2014, the Government set up an interministerial technical committee responsible for drafting reports and monitoring the implementation of the recommendations made by the treaty bodies and during the country's universal periodic review. The committee is made up of representatives of all ministerial departments, the National Human Rights Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman and the OHCHR country office in Mauritania. The representatives of the latter have observer status in the committee.

142. The interministerial technical committee has approved its work plan for 2015 and has begun drafting reports relating to the implementation of the following conventions:

- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families

- Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
- International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

143. To improve the monitoring of the recommendations made during the country's universal periodic review, several events (seminars and workshops) were organized by the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action, in partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

144. These activities were concerned primarily with the recommendations made during the country's universal periodic review and the preparation of an action plan for their implementation. In addition to representatives of government bodies, parliamentarians, magistrates, judicial officers and representatives of the organizations and institutions responsible for defending human rights also took part in the seminars and workshops.

145. Moreover, the Government has undertaken, with the support of its partners, to draw up an action plan to combat racial discrimination, xenophobia and related forms of intolerance, and a draft national strategy for strengthening social cohesion.

146. Several training and awareness-raising seminars were organized for law enforcement officials on the prohibition of torture and other degrading treatment, in accordance with the applicable international standards.

B. Challenges and constraints

147. Certain recommendations from the first cycle have not yet been acted upon.

148. The main challenges facing Mauritania are those relating to the implementation of an action plan to combat trafficking in persons and the withdrawal of its general reservation to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It has also encountered difficulties in giving effect to other recommendations. A prime example is the slow pace of action for the adoption of legislation on, inter alia, female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.

VI. Priorities, initiatives, national commitments, difficulties and constraints

A. Priorities

149. National priorities revolve around strengthening the rule of law, democracy and national cohesion; security and the fight against terrorism; poverty eradication; good governance; anti-corruption efforts; the eradication of the legacy and contemporary forms of slavery; education, health and the advancement of women and young people.

B. Initiatives and national commitments

150. From 2010 to 2014, in its capacity as a member and Vice-President of the Human Rights Council, and as Chairperson of the African Union, Mauritania has demonstrated its support for just causes and issues relating to respect for human dignity in Islamic, Arab, African and international forums.

C. Constraints and challenges

Constraints

151. Underdevelopment is still a major obstacle to the full enjoyment of economic and social rights.

152. Despite the enormous difficulties facing the country, the Government, with support from its technical and financial partners, is conducting ambitious programmes to combat poverty and to promote human rights with a view to achieving the post-2015 development goals.

Challenges

153. The main obstacles preventing the country from achieving the full enjoyment of human rights include:

- The inadequacy of the human and financial resources of the institutions and organizations responsible for defending human rights;
- The low level of specialization of magistrates and judicial officers in human rights;
- The absence of a human rights component in school curricula.

VII. Expectations and assistance needs

154. There has been an OHCHR office in Mauritania since 2010. It provides technical assistance to the competent national institutions (the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action, the National Human Rights Commission, the competent ministerial departments and other institutions, the national courts and civil society organizations). This assistance must continue in order to support the reforms undertaken in the area of human rights.

155. This support should be aimed at building the capacity of the institutions responsible for human rights, primarily the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Affairs, Children and the Family, the National Human Rights Commission and the interministerial technical committee responsible for monitoring the implementation of the country's international human rights obligations.

156. The implementation of the action plan to give effect to the recommendations of treaty bodies, those made under special procedures and those made during the country's universal periodic review requires support from various partners.

157. Specific assistance should be provided to improve prison policy in general and, in particular, to bring prisons up to standard.

158. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania is grateful to all friendly countries and its technical and financial partners for their contribution to the efforts undertaken as part of its national policy for the promotion and protection of human rights and calls upon the international community for greater cooperation with a view to achieving the post-2015 development goals.

Notes

[1] Source: National Statistical Office.

[2] Ministry of the Interior and Decentralization.

[3] Source: Ministry of Justice.

[4] Source: Ministry of Agriculture.

[5] Office of the Commissioner for Food Security.

[6] Strategic Framework for Poverty Eradication (phase III).

[7] Source: TADAMOUN.

[8] Source: Ministry of Health.

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Mauritania

The present report is a compilation of the information contained in reports of the treaty bodies and special procedures, including observations and comments by the State concerned, in reports of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, and in other relevant official United Nations documents. It is presented in a summarized manner owing to word-limit constraints. For the full texts, please refer to the documents referenced. The report does not contain any opinions, views or suggestions on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights other than those contained in public reports and statements issued by the Office. It follows the general guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council in its decision 17/119. Information included herein has been systematically referenced in endnotes. The report has been prepared taking into consideration the periodicity of the review, and developments during that period.

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I. Background and framework

A. Scope of international obligations[1]

International human rights treaties[2]

	Status during previous cycle	*Action after review*	*Not ratified/not accepted*
Ratification, accession or succession	ICERD (1988) ICESCR (2004) ICCPR (2004) CEDAW (2001) CAT (2004) CRC (1991) OP-CRC-SC (2007) ICRMW (2007)	OP-CAT (2012) CRPD (2012) ICPPED (2012)	ICCPR-OP 2 OP-CRC-AC
Reservations and/or declarations	ICCPR (reservation arts. 18 and 23 (4), 2004) CEDAW (general reservation, 2001) CAT (reservation arts. 20 and 30 (1), 2004) CRC (general reservation, 1990)	CEDAW (partial withdrawal of general reservation made upon accession, which continues to apply for arts. 13 (a) and 16, 2014)	
Complaints procedures, inquiries and urgent action[3]		OP-CRPD, art. 6 (2012)	ICERD, art. 14 OP-ICESCR ICCPR, art. 41 ICCPR-OP 1 OP-CEDAW CAT, arts. 20-22 OP-CRC-IC ICRMW, arts. 76-77 ICPPED, arts. 31-32

1. In 2013, the Committee against Torture invited Mauritania to ratify ICCPR-OP 1,[4] ICCPR-OP 2,[5] OP-ICESCR,[6] OP-CEDAW[7] and OP-CRC-AC.

2. In 2013, the Human Rights Committee encouraged Mauritania to withdraw its reservations to articles 18 and 23 (4) of ICCPR.[8]

Other main relevant international instruments

	Status during previous cycle	*Action after review*	*Not ratified*
Ratification, accession or succession	1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol Palermo Protocol[9] Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocols I and II[10] ILO fundamental conventions[11]		1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness Additional Protocol III to the 1949 Geneva Conventions[12] Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court ILO Conventions Nos. 169 and 189[13] Convention against Discrimination in Education

3. In 2014, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences,[14] and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women [15] encouraged Mauritania to ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). In 2014, the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance [16] urged Mauritania to accede to the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness, as did the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).[17]

4. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recommended that Mauritania ratify the Convention against Discrimination in Education.[18]

B. Constitutional and legislative framework

5. Noting that slavery had been designated a crime against humanity in 2012,[19] the Special Rapporteur on slavery encouraged the Ministry of Justice to expedite the review of the Anti-Slavery Act of 2007; called upon the Government to amend the Act in accordance with her previous recommendations and road map; stated that the legislative approach should be accompanied by effective measures to compensate for discrimination and to rehabilitate victims;[20] and emphasized that the Government should, without delay, publish in the Official Gazette the anti-slavery conventions that Mauritania had ratified.[21]

6. The Committee against Torture urged Mauritania to include a provision in the Criminal Code that defined and specifically criminalized racial or ethnic discrimination, including slavery-like practices, to include in the Anti-Slavery Act a definition that covered all forms of slavery and amend it to enable victims of slavery or related practices to cause criminal proceedings to be initiated by suing for damages.[22]

7. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women welcomed the 2013 Act criminalizing slavery and torture as crimes against humanity.[23]

8. The Committee against Torture recommended that Mauritania amend the Amnesty Act of 1993, which provides a blanket amnesty to members of the armed forces and security forces, combat impunity with respect to acts of torture and ensure that victims and their relatives are protected from reprisals and intimidation.[24]

9. The same Committee urged Mauritania to ensure that victims of torture obtain redress, and to amend the Criminal Code to remove references to *qisas* penalties.[25]

10. The Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to ensure that the reference to Islam in the preamble to the State party's Constitution did not prevent the full application of ICCPR in its legal order and did not serve to justify the non-implementation by the State party of its obligations under the Covenant.[26]

11. The United Nations country team took the view that Mauritania should finalize and adopt the pending bills on the Associations Act, the Violence against Women Act and the Asylum Act, and introduce the necessary accompanying measures to ensure their implementation.[27]

12. Noting that discriminatory provisions towards women were still to be found in the Criminal Code, the Nationality Code and the Personal Status Code, the country team took the view that Mauritania should amend and/or repeal those provisions.[28]

13. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women urged Mauritania to define rape as a criminal offence in the Criminal Code.[29]

14. The Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to systematically publish in the Official Gazette the acts ratifying human rights treaties and conventions, and to raise the awareness of judges, lawyers and prosecutors of ICCPR to ensure that its provisions were taken into account by the national courts.[30]

C. Institutional and human rights infrastructure and policy measures

Status of national human rights institutions[31]

National human rights institution	*Status during previous cycle*	*Status during present cycle*[32]
Commission nationale des droits de l'homme	B (2009)	A (2011)

15. While noting with satisfaction that the National Human Rights Commission had been classified as A status, the Committee against Torture urged Mauritania to provide the Commission with the resources it needed to publicize its recommendations and reinforce its independence.[33]

16. Stating that analysis of and research on slavery by the Commission would be crucial, the Special Rapporteur on slavery encouraged Mauritania to ensure nationwide, systematic and regular collection of disaggregated data on all forms of slavery.[34]

17. The country team explained that, in 2014, the Council of Ministers had adopted a road map for eradicating the consequences of slavery that reflected the recommendations of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and its consequences, and that an interministerial committee had adopted a national action plan for implementing the road map.[35] The Special Rapporteur noted that further efforts were necessary in order to implement fully the

road map.[36] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women[37] and the Human Rights Committee[38] made similar recommendations.

18. The country team indicated that a national agency (Tadamoun) on eradication of the consequences of slavery, social integration and poverty alleviation had been established in 2013. It noted that, although that agency was entitled to lodge complaints against alleged perpetrators of slavery-like practices by suing for damages on behalf of the victims, since its inception it had exercised that entitlement only once.[39]

19. Stating that Tadamoun did not have the necessary means to act, the ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations urged the Government to ensure that victims of slavery were able to assert their rights. It hoped that the special court for examining slavery-like practices would be established as soon as possible.[40]

20. The country team took the view that Mauritania should speed up the process of drafting the national action plan on combating racial discrimination, adopt all measures necessary for its implementation and follow an approach that was focused on victims' rights.[41]

21. The Special Rapporteur on racism recommended that the amendments to the anti-slavery law enabling non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to act on behalf of the victims of slavery-like practices and provide them with protection and support should be fast-tracked.[42]

22. The Special Rapporteur on slavery stated that awareness-raising efforts should be complemented by mandatory training seminars on anti-slavery laws for judges and representatives of local authorities, gendarmeries, police, media and NGOs.[43] The Human Rights Committee,[44] the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights,[45] the ILO Committee of Experts[46] and the country team[47] made similar comments.

II. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

A. Cooperation with treaty bodies

1. Reporting status

Treaty body	*Concluding observations included in previous review*	*Latest report submitted since previous review*	*Latest concluding observations*	*Reporting status*
Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	August 2004	-	-	Eighth to tenth reports overdue since 2008
Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights	-	2009 (initially due in 2007)	November 2012	Second report due in 2017
Human Rights Committee	-	2012 (initially due in 2006)	October 2013	Second report due in 2017

Treaty body	*Concluding observations included in previous review*	*Latest report submitted since previous review*	*Latest concluding observations*	*Reporting status*
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	May 2007	2012 (initially due in 2010)	July 2014	Fourth report due in 2018
Committee against Torture	-	2012 (initially due in 2005)	May 2013	Second report due in 2017
Committee on the Rights of the Child	June 2009	-	-	Third to fifth reports overdue since 2013; initial report on OP-CRC-SC overdue since 2009
Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families	-	-	-	Initial report overdue since 2008
Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities	-	-	-	Initial report overdue since 2014
Committee on Enforced Disappearances	-	-	-	Initial report overdue since 2014

2. Responses to specific follow-up requests by treaty bodies

Concluding observations

Treaty body	Due in	Subject matter	Submitted in
Human Rights Committee	2014	Application of the Covenant; torture and ill-treatment; slavery; conditions of detention.[48]	2014[49] and 2015[50]
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women	2016	Female genital mutilation; disadvantaged groups of women.[51]	-
Committee against Torture	2014	Length of police custody; prison conditions; torture and ill-treatment.[52]	Reminder sent in 2014[53]

23. The country team indicated that the Government had set up a technical interministerial committee responsible for drafting reports and following up the recommendations issued by international human rights mechanisms. It added that that committee was developing a national action plan for implementing those recommendations, with technical support from the country office in Mauritania of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).[54] The

country team took the view that Mauritania should oversee the finalization and implementation of that plan.[55]

B. Cooperation with special procedures[56]

	Status during previous cycle	*Current status*
Standing invitation	No	No
Visits undertaken	Racism (2008)	Racism (2013)
	Working Group on Arbitrary Detention (2008)	Slavery (2014)
	Slavery (2009)	
Visits agreed to in principle	Freedom of religion or belief	Freedom of religion or belief
	Migrants	Torture
		Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent
Visits requested	-	-
Responses to letters of allegation and urgent appeals	During the period under review, nine communications were sent. The Government replied to two communications.	
Follow-up reports and missions	Racism (mission)[57]; slavery (mission)[58]	

24. The Committee against Torture urged Mauritania to invite the Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers to visit the State party.[59]

C. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

25. The country team noted that the OHCHR office in Mauritania, which had been inaugurated on 9 December 2010,[60] provided technical assistance to the Government, to civil society and to the National Human Rights Commission, in particular for drafting bills. The office had also undertaken activities related to monitoring human rights violations and drafting analysis reports.[61] It had, inter alia, drafted a public report on the incidents and arrests that had taken place in Rosso[62] in 2014.[63]

26. OHCHR had supported the interministerial committee to develop its workplan for drafting three periodic reports to the human rights treaty bodies and the national report for the universal periodic review.[64]

27. During her visit to Mauritania in April 2011, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights raised a wide range of concerns about women's rights, slavery and its remnants, access to justice, transitional justice for past violations and the country's international legal obligations.[65]

III. Implementation of international human rights obligations, taking into account applicable international humanitarian law

A. Equality and non-discrimination

28. The Special Rapporteur on racism noted that many individuals did not have equal opportunities with regard to education, employment, business opportunities, or access to justice and government services.[66] He recommended that Pular, Soninke and Wolof should be given constitutional status as official languages.[67]

29. UNHCR stated that the nationality law failed to guarantee the right of every child to acquire a nationality.[68]

30. The Special Rapporteur on racism indicated that it was paramount that the Government addressed the issues the census process had highlighted so that individuals, and consequently their children, were not unduly deprived of their right to identity and nationality.[69] In 2012, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights urged Mauritania to facilitate birth registration.[70]

31. The Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to review its Nationality Code in order to allow Mauritanian women to transmit their nationality on an equal footing with men, and the 2001 Personal Status Code in order to remove the provisions that discriminated against women.[71] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women,[72] the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[73] and UNHCR made similar recommendations.[74]

32. The Human Rights Committee was concerned that not all repatriated Mauritanian refugees had obtained identity and citizenship documents.[75]

33. UNHCR recommended that Mauritania ensure issuance of nationality documents to all returnees from Senegal, including birth certificates for children; review local integration and livelihood assistance policies for the returnees; and cooperate with UNHCR on implementing the voluntary repatriation of an additional 800 Mauritanian refugees.[76] The country team made similar recommendations.[77]

34. The Special Rapporteur on racism observed that, despite some progress, the Haratine suffered from discrimination, marginalization and exclusion. He noted that approximately 50 per cent of them were in de facto slavery through domestic servitude and bonded or forced labour.[78] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had similar concerns.[79]

B. Right to life, liberty and security of person

35. Noting with appreciation that Mauritania had been observing a moratorium on the death penalty since 2007, the Human Rights Committee remained concerned that the death penalty was still provided for in the Criminal Code and was applied by domestic courts, including in the case of crimes committed by minors. It urged Mauritania to consider abolishing the death penalty.[80]

36. The country team noted that the death penalty was prescribed, inter alia, in cases of apostasy, and that in December 2014 the Nouadhibou Correctional Court had found a man guilty of the offences of apostasy and *zendagha* and had sentenced him to death.[81]

37. Concerned by reports of killings of individuals following repression by security forces during various demonstrations, the Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to carry out investigations into those cases.[82]

38. The Committee against Torture was concerned by reports that since 2009 at least two prisoners had died after being tortured,[83] and that the authorities had been slow to investigate claims that acts of torture had been committed in 2011 and 2012 in

Nouakchott, Kaédi and Ould Yengé. It urged Mauritania to put an end to torture and to ensure that allegations of torture by police or security forces were promptly investigated and the persons concerned prosecuted and convicted, in line with the commitment made during the universal periodic review[84] in 2010.[85] The Human Rights Committee[86] and the country team[87] made similar recommendations.

39. The Committee against Torture and the Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to establish a national preventive mechanism.[88]

40. Concerned that individuals were held in incommunicado detention, the Committee against Torture urged Mauritania to keep a register of all persons deprived of their liberty that was up-to-date and available to all competent judicial authorities.[89] The Human Rights Committee[90] and the Committee against Torture[91] urged Mauritania to guarantee regular access to all places of deprivation of liberty.[92]

41. The country team noted that, despite efforts to renovate some prison centres, conditions of detention remained below minimum standards. It also noted that judicial authorities continued to have excessive recourse to pretrial detention.[93] The Human Rights Committee[94] and the Committee against Torture[95] had similar concerns.

42. The country team recommended that Mauritania take steps to ensure that recourse to pretrial detention was limited solely to cases prescribed by law and that the recommendations of the treaty bodies concerning conditions of detention were implemented.[96]

43. Concerned by the stigmatization of women victims of rape and the fact that they could themselves risk criminal prosecution, the Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to review the requirement that a witness must be produced when a charge of rape was brought.[97]

44. UNHCR stated that the law enforcement and justice response in handling sexual gender-based violence cases needed to be strengthened to ensure that the survivors had effective access to adequate protection.[98]

45. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the Human Rights Committee noted with concern that the practice of female genital mutilation remained highly prevalent.[99] The Committee against Torture urged Mauritania to adopt a law prohibiting female genital mutilation, in line with the commitment made during the universal periodic review[100] in 2010.[101]

46. The country team took the view that Mauritania should eradicate sexual violence, evaluate the impact of implementation of the strategy to promote the abandonment of female genital mutilation and ensure that women victims of violence had access to justice on an equal basis with men.[102]

47. The Human Rights Committee noted with concern the persistence of early marriage,[103] and the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights urged Mauritania to prevent it.[104]

48. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned about the vulnerable conditions of children who lived in the street and those who were engaged in labour. It recommended that Mauritania strictly enforce existing legislation against child labour, expedite the adoption of the draft law on the prohibition of child labour and address the root causes of child labour.[105]

49. Concerned about the exploitation of girls in child labour under slave-like conditions, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Mauritania fully dismantle the caste-based system of enslaving women in domestic work.[106]

50. The Committee against Torture urged Mauritania to develop a comprehensive national strategy for combating traditional and modern forms of slavery and discrimination, including early and forced marriage, servitude, forced child labour, human trafficking and the exploitation of domestic workers, in line with the commitment it had made during the universal periodic review in 2010.[107]

51. The Special Rapporteur on slavery indicated that the misinterpretation of religion to justify slavery and slavery-like practices was a powerful means to keep slaves in subordination and to perpetuate manifestations of slavery. She encouraged the Ministry of Religious Affairs to facilitate the formulation and pronouncement of a fatwa by religious leaders, in collaboration with civil society, asserting that all forms of slavery and slavery-like practices were forbidden under Islam.[108]

52. She recommended that the Government issue orders to the police and the judiciary regarding the enforcement of slavery legislation to ensure that allegations of slavery and slavery-like practices were effectively investigated and prosecuted.[109]

53. She indicated that the Government should provide slaves who had fled their masters with legal assistance to file a case, temporary shelter and, wherever possible, microcredit for small businesses.[110]

54. Concerned about the criminalization of women engaged in prostitution, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Mauritania adopt comprehensive legislation and policies aimed at combating all forms of trafficking.[111]

C. Administration of justice, including impunity and the rule of law

55. The Committee against Torture[112] and the Human Rights Committee[113] urged Mauritania to guarantee and protect the independence of the judiciary.

56. Concerned that legal aid was not always provided for most defendants and that procedural rights were not always respected, the Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to ensure that defendants were guaranteed all the rights provided for in article 14 of the Covenant.[114]

57. Concerned about the lack of effective judicial remedies for women who were victims of violence and harmful practices, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Mauritania establish expeditious legal remedies that were accessible to women.[115]

58. The Special Rapporteur on racism noted that, until 2014, no case of racial discrimination had been referred to national courts, and the few cases of slavery-like practices brought before courts had not led to prosecution or punishment of the perpetrators, or to redress for the victims.[116] Judges appeared to be recruited mainly from one caste or tribe, representing a barrier to access to justice, leading to the de facto exclusion of those who did not speak Arabic.[117]

59. The country team noted that the Anti-Slavery Act of 2007 was rarely enforced and that it was difficult to obtain reliable information on the number of cases that had given rise to investigations and to convictions of persons suspected of slavery.[118]

60. The country team took the view that Mauritania should investigate allegations of slavery and prosecute and punish the perpetrators of that offence.[119]

61. The Special Rapporteur on racism noted difficulties in registration, compensation and reparation for some returnees, continuing land disputes and the lack of accountability for the human rights violations committed in 1989. The national strategy on social cohesion that was under consideration should include a transitional

justice component to enable public discussion on the events of the late 1980s that had led to the deportation of thousands of Mauritanian citizens and the deprivation of their nationality and economic power.[120]

62. The country team noted that the Government's commitment to the definitive settlement of that humanitarian debt was weak, inasmuch as the matter had been officially closed, despite the fact that the victims maintained their claims.[121]

63. The country team drew attention to the Human Rights Committee's recommendation inviting Mauritania to set up a mechanism to address the humanitarian consequences of those events. It also recommended that Mauritania request the assistance of United Nations expertise in strengthening respect for and promoting the right to the truth, and in strengthening efforts to combat impunity, following the large-scale violations of human rights that had been committed between 1980 and 1990.[122]

64. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was concerned that corruption affected all sectors of the State, including the judiciary. It called on Mauritania to expedite the establishment of the national anti-corruption observatory and to combat corruption.[123]

D. Right to privacy, marriage and family life

65. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women was concerned about the exclusive authority of the husband in family-related matters, the dissolution of marriage at the will of the husband only and polygamy.[124] The Human Rights Committee had similar concerns.[125] Both urged Mauritania to amend the Personal Status Code.[126]

66. Noting with concern that homosexuality was considered a crime punishable by the death penalty, the Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to decriminalize homosexuality and protect the freedom and privacy of the person.[127]

E. Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and right to participate in public and political life

67. Concerned that for Muslim Mauritanians a change of religion was classified as apostasy, punishable by the death penalty, the Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to remove the crime of apostasy from its legislation.[128]

68. The OHCHR country office urged the Government to undertake an impartial investigation into the conduct of the police and gendarmerie in relation to their actions to maintain order and disperse the public meeting of 11 November 2014.[129]

69. The country team took the view that Mauritania should harmonize its national legislation with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and undertake a review of the freedom of religion.[130]

70. The Human Rights Committee was concerned by obstacles to the creation and registration of some NGOs or associations.[131] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights encouraged Mauritania to permit the free registration of NGOs and lift the restrictions imposed on non-profit radio broadcasting stations.[132]

71. The Human Rights Committee urged Mauritania to adopt a new act governing the exercise of freedom of association that provided the protection necessary for human rights defenders.[133]

72. Reporting that OHCHR had noted deficiencies in the Associations Act and in the Right to Peaceful Assembly Act of 1973,[134] the country team took the view that Mauritania should align provisions concerning exercise of the freedom of association and the right to peaceful assembly with the State's international obligations.[135]

73. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Mauritania adopt a quota system to promote the appointment of women, including women from ethnic minorities.[136] The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights[137] and the Human Rights Committee[138] made similar recommendations.

74. The Special Rapporteur on racism noted that in 2013, out of 95 seats in the National Assembly, only 5 were reportedly held by Haratine and out of the 56 senators, only 1 was Haratine.[139] The Government should promote equal access to political life for the communities that had historically been discriminated against.[140]

F. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

75. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights called on Mauritania to ensure that the national minimum wage was sufficient to enable a decent standard of living for workers and their families.[141]

76. Concerned by the precarious labour conditions of women working in rural areas, especially Haratine and Afro-Mauritanian women who were often unpaid and lacked social protection, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women called upon Mauritania to support entrepreneurship among rural women.[142]

77. Concerned at the lack of monitoring of conditions of work in the informal economy, and that the informal economy still employed the majority of the working population, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Mauritania reduce the level of informal employment.[143]

78. The same Committee was concerned that the establishment of a trade union was subject to authorization and urged Mauritania to protect trade union rights.[144]

G. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living

79. Noting with concern that a large proportion of the population still lived in poverty, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Mauritania further reduce poverty and eliminate extreme poverty by paying particular attention to women, former slaves and descendants of slaves, and disadvantaged and marginalized individuals and groups.[145]

80. Concerned that the social security system was targeted at the segment of the population with stable employment and that no scheme was available to the majority of the population, the Committee called on Mauritania to improve the coverage of the social security system.[146]

81. Noting with concern the frequent food crises and the chronic food insecurity, the Committee urged Mauritania to strengthen its food security mechanisms.[147]

82. While noting with appreciation the expansion of public infrastructure,[148] the Committee called on Mauritania to ensure the safety of water supplied to the population and improve access to safe sanitation services.[149]

83. While recognizing that the development of a comprehensive action plan on nutrition represented significant progress, the country team took the view that Mauritania should, inter alia, ensure that canteens/cafeterias were available in all

public primary schools and strengthen programmes for dealing with acute malnutrition.[150]

84. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the obstacles to women's access to land and recommended that Mauritania amend any discriminatory provisions limiting the ownership, control and usage of land by women and adopt a public policy on land management that integrated a gender perspective.[151]

H. Right to health

85. Pointing out that the health-care system was affected by a lack of qualified personnel and very limited access to health-care centres, especially in rural and suburban areas,[152] the country team took the view that Mauritania should increase the financial resources of the health-care system, especially in respect of the most vulnerable segments of the population.[153]

86. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights recommended that Mauritania pursue the decentralization of health-care resources and activities with a view to achieving universality of health-care services.[154]

87. The Committee was concerned at the absence of adequate laws regulating the practice of traditional medicine and called on Mauritania to regulate it.[155]

88. Noting with concern that maternal and infant mortality remained high in spite of improvements in maternal health services, the Committee called on Mauritania to expand the provision of obstetric and neonatal care.[156]

89. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women noted with concern the delay in approving the bill on reproductive health and recommended that Mauritania enact and implement the bill, and protect the sexual and reproductive health of women.[157]

90. The same Committee was concerned that abortion was criminalized and recommended that Mauritania amend its legislation to decriminalize abortion in cases of rape, incest, risk to the life or health of the mother and severe foetal impairment.[158]

91. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights encouraged Mauritania to combat HIV/AIDS and decentralize the provision of antiretroviral treatment.[159]

I. Right to education

92. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights called on Mauritania to address obstacles to education, including the distance to school, the cost of education and the social and cultural factors involved, such as girls' duties at home.[160] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women made similar recommendations.[161]

93. Although the enrolment rate at the primary level of education had increased,[162] the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights noted with concern that more than half of the female population was illiterate. It urged Mauritania to ensure girls' access to secondary and higher education.[163]

94. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women remained concerned about the marginalization of non-Arab and rural girls in the education system. It recommended that Mauritania strengthen its adult literacy programmes, especially for non-Arab women, Afro-Mauritanian women and women living in rural areas and facilitate their access to school.[164]

95. Concerned about the risk of sexual harassment and abuse by teachers in schools, that same Committee recommended that Mauritania adopt preventive strategies and ensure that perpetrators were punished.[165]

96. Concerned at the high school dropout rate and the poor quality of education, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights called on Mauritania to reintegrate in school children who had dropped out.[166] The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women had similar concerns.[167]

97. The country team took the view that Mauritania should develop a strategy to integrate human rights into the school system, improve the quality of education, keep children in school, in particular girls, and re-enrol school dropouts.[168]

J. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

98. UNHCR stated that, as at the end of November 2014, Mauritania had a refugee population of 56,832.[169]

99. UNHCR stated that, since October 2014, the Agence nationale du registre de la population et des titres sécurisés had started to use biometric registration for urban refugees, allowing them to receive refugee cards and a national identification number.[170]

100. UNHCR recommended that Mauritania prioritize the finalization and adoption of the draft refugee law and develop administrative regulations, policies and procedures to ensure full compliance with its obligations under the 1951 Convention.[171] The Human Rights Committee,[172] the Committee against Torture[173] and the country team[174] made a similar recommendation.

101. Stating that refugees and asylum seekers continued to face difficulties in registering their children born in Mauritania, UNHCR recommended that Mauritania ensure that those children were registered at birth and eliminate the constraints in the law.[175] The Human Rights Committee made a similar recommendation.[176]

K. Right to development, and environmental issues

102. The country team noted that the many human rights violations related to land administration were caused by a lack of relevant information and tools for managing the land system, a lack of communication with rural communities and their defiance towards the administrative authorities, and a failure to enforce legislation.[177]

103. The country team took the view that Mauritania should implement the recommendations made by the special procedures and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in formulating and implementing land policies.[178]

104. Concerned at the negative impact of extractive and mining activities, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights called on Mauritania to implement the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and ensure that the free, prior and informed consent of the population was obtained in decision-making processes on extractive and mining projects affecting them.[179]

105. The Special Rapporteur on slavery remained concerned about the possible impact of businesses and foreign investors and companies investing in Mauritania that did not adhere to international standards preventing the use of child labour and forced labour, and said that all enterprises should develop corporate social responsibility policies.[180]

L. Human rights and counter-terrorism

106. Concerned that article 3 of the 2010 act on combating terrorism defined terrorism in broad and vague terms, the Committee against Torture[181] and the Human Rights Committee[182] urged Mauritania to guarantee the fundamental legal safeguards for persons deprived of their liberty, and to bring the duration of police custody, including for terrorist offences, into line with the provisions of the Covenant.

107. Noting the scarcity of information concerning the conditions of detention of Salafist prisoners,[183] the country team took the view that Mauritania should protect human rights in the context of counter-terrorism measures, investigate the deaths and conditions of detention of Salafists, and include in the mandate of the next national mechanism for the prevention of torture the function of visiting secret places of detention, including those housing perpetrators of terrorism offences.[184]

Notes

[1] Unless indicated otherwise, the status of ratification of instruments listed in the table may be found on the official website of the United Nations Treaty Collection database, Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, http://treaties.un.org/. Please also refer to the United Nations compilation on Mauritania from the previous cycle (A/HRC/WG.6/9/MRT/2).

[2] The following abbreviations have been used in the present document:

ICERD	International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
OP-ICESCR	Optional Protocol to ICESCR
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICCPR-OP 1	Optional Protocol to ICCPR
ICCPR-OP 2	Second Optional Protocol to ICCPR, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
OP-CEDAW	Optional Protocol to CEDAW
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
OP-CRC-AC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict
OP-CRC-SC	Optional Protocol to CRC on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography
OP-CRC-IC	Optional Protocol to CRC on a communications procedure
ICRMW	International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
OP-CRPD	Optional Protocol to CRPD
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

[3] Individual complaints: ICCPR-OP 1, art. 1; OP-CEDAW, art. 1; OP-CRPD, art. 1; OP-ICESCR, art. 1; OP-CRC-IC, art. 5; ICERD, art. 14; CAT, art. 22; ICRMW, art. 77; and ICPPED, art. 31. Inquiry procedure: OP-CEDAW, art. 8; CAT, art. 20; ICPPED, art. 33; OP-CRPD, art. 6; OP-ICESCR, art. 11; and OP-CRC-IC, art. 13. Inter-State complaints: ICCPR, art. 41; ICRMW, art. 76; ICPPED, art. 32; CAT, art. 21; OP-ICESCR, art. 10; and OP-CRC-IC, art. 12. Urgent action: ICPPED, art. 30.

[4] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 28.

[5] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 12.

[6] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 34.

[7] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, para. 48.

[8] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 6.

[9] Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

[10] Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field (First Convention); Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea (Second Convention); Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War (Third Convention); Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War (Fourth Convention); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I); Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12

August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II). For the official status of ratifications, see International Committee of the Red Cross, www.icrc.org/IHL.

[11] International Labour Organization (ILO) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29); Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105); Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87); Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98); Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138); Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182).

[12] Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III). For the official status of ratifications, see International Committee of the Red Cross, www.icrc.org/IHL.

[13] ILO Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), and Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).

[14] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 38.

[15] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 36-37.

[16] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 67.

[17] See UNHCR submission for the universal periodic review of Mauritania, p. 6.

[18] See UNESCO submission for the universal periodic review of Mauritania, para. 31.1.

[19] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 15.

[20] Ibid., para. 36. See also country team submission for the universal periodic review of Mauritania, para. 3, and CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 4 (c).

[21] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 41.

[22] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 21. See also A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 36 and CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 7.

[23] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, para. 4 (a).

[24] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 19.

[25] Ibid., para. 20.

[26] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 6.

[27] See country team submission, para. 8.

[28] Ibid., para. 21.

[29] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 26-27.

[30] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 5.

[31] According to article 5 of the rules of procedure of the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights Sub-Committee on Accreditation, the classifications for accreditation used by the Sub-Committee are: A: voting member (fully in compliance with each of the Paris Principles); B: non-voting member (not fully in compliance with each of the Paris Principles or insufficient information provided to make a determination); C: no status (not in compliance with the Paris Principles).

[32] For the list of national human rights institutions with accreditation status granted by the International Coordinating Committee of National Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, see A/HRC/27/40, annex.

[33] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 13. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 17.

[34] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 42.

[35] See country team submission, para. 9.

[36] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 34.

[37] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 28-29.

[38] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 17.

[39] See country team submission, para. 11.

[40] ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, direct request concerning ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – Mauritania, adopted in 2014, published 104th ILC session (2015), available from www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3187943.

[41] See country team submission, para. 14. See also CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 7, CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 44-45, OHCHR, "OHCHR in the field: Middle East and North Africa" (2013), p. 312, and A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 64.

[42] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 73. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.2, para 3 (d).

[43] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 41.

[44] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 17.

[45] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 7.

[46] ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, direct request concerning ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – Mauritania, adopted in 2014,

published 104th ILC session (2015), available from www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3187943.

[47] See country team submission, para. 31.

[48] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 26.

[49] See the information provided by Mauritania in follow-up to the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/MRT/INT_CCPR_AFR_MRT_18785_F.pdf (accessed 4 February 2015).

[50] See CCPR/C/CMT/CO/1/Add.1. See also the letter dated 13 April 2015 from the Human Rights Committee to the Permanent Mission of Mauritania to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/MRT/INT_CCPR_FUL_MRT_20157_E.pdf (accessed 7 July 2015).

[51] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, para. 53.

[52] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 30.

[53] See the letter dated 7 July 2014 from the Committee against Torture to the Permanent Mission of Mauritania to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CAT/Shared%20Documents/MRT/INT_CAT_FUL_MRT_17609_E.pdf (accessed 4 February 2015).

[54] See country team submission, para. 16.

[55] Ibid.

[56] For the titles of special procedures mandate holders, see www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Themes.aspx and www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/SP/Pages/Countries.aspx.

[57] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1 and 2.

[58] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1.

[59] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 15.

[60] See country team submission, para. 18.

[61] See OHCHR, "OHCHR in the field: Middle East and North Africa" (2011), pp. 360-363. See also OHCHR, "OHCHR in the field: Middle East and North Africa" (2012), pp. 266-267; "OHCHR in the field: Middle East and North Africa" (2013), pp. 312-314; and "OHCHR in the field: Middle East and North Africa" (2014), pp. 245-246.

[62] See "Rapport de la Mission d'établissement des faits du Bureau du Haut-Commissariat des Nations Unies aux droits de l'homme en Mauritanie, 15-16 novembre 2014".

[63] See www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15414&LangID=F.

[64] See OHCHR, "OHCHR in the field: Middle East and North Africa" (2014), p. 245.

[65] See www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=10969&LangID=E.

[66] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 59. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 61, and A/HRC/26/49/Add.2, para. 3 (b).

[67] See A/HRC/11/36/Add.2, para. 81.

[68] See UNHCR submission, p. 5.

[69] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 67. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.2, para. 3 (g).

[70] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 19.

[71] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 9.

[72] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 14-15 and 32-33.

[73] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 10.

[74] See UNHCR submission, pp. 6 and 8.

[75] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 24.

[76] See UNHCR submission, p. 10. See also CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 16.

[77] See country team submission, para. 49.

[78] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 7. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.2, para. 3 (b).

[79] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 44-45. See also A/HRC/28/85, p. 122.

[80] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 12.

[81] See country team submission, para. 24.

[82] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 13.

[83] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 8.

[84] Ibid., para. 18.

[85] See A/HRC/16/17, paras. 90.33, 90.35, 91.13 and 91.15.

[86] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 14. See also the information provided by Mauritania in follow-up to the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee, p. 2, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/MRT/INT_CCPR_AFR_MRT_18785_F.pdf (accessed 4 February 2015).

[87] See country team submission, para. 31.
[88] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 14 and CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 14. See also the information provided by Mauritania in follow-up to the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee, p. 2. Accessible from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/MRT/INT_CCPR_AFR_MRT_18785_F.pdf (accessed 4 February 2015).
[89] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 11.
[90] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 14.
[91] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 22.
[92] See also the information provided by Mauritania in follow-up to the concluding observations of the Human Rights Committee, p. 1, available from http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/MRT/INT_CCPR_AFR_MRT_18785_F.pdf (accessed 4 February 2015).
[93] See country team submission, para. 26. See also www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15414&LangID=F and www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15675&LangID=E.
[94] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 19.
[95] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 22.
[96] See country team submission, para. 31. See also www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15414&LangID=F and www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15675&LangID=E.
[97] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 10.
[98] See UNHCR submission, p. 7.
[99] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 21, CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 24-25 and CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 11.
[100] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 24.
[101] See A/HRC/16/17, paras. 90.28-90.32, 91.12, 92.31, 92.32 and 92.39.
[102] See country team submission, para. 24.
[103] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 23. See also CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 46-47.
[104] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 18.
[105] Ibid., para. 20.
[106] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 36-37.
[107] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 21.
[108] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 39.
[109] Ibid., para. 37.
[110] Ibid., para. 40.
[111] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 28-29. See also CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 23.
[112] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 15.
[113] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 20.
[114] Ibid., para. 20.
[115] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 16-17.
[116] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 21. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.2.
[117] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 22. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.2, para. 3 (e).
[118] See country team submission, para. 25. See also ILO Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations, direct request concerning ILO Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) – Mauritania, adopted in 2014, published 104th ILC session (2015), available from www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:13100:0::NO:13100:P13100_COMMENT_ID:3187943.
[119] See country team submission, para. 31.
[120] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 72. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add.2.
[121] See country team submission, para. 30.
[122] Ibid., para. 31.
[123] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 9.
[124] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 46-47.
[125] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 9.
[126] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 46-47 and CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 9.
[127] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 8.
[128] Ibid., para. 21. See also country team , para. 35.
[129] See www.ohchr.org/FR/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15414&LangID=F and www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=15675&LangID=E.
[130] See country team submission, para. 35.
[131] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 22.
[132] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 33.

[133] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 22.
[134] See country team submission, para. 34.
[135] Ibid., para. 35.
[136] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 36-37. See also CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 20-21 and 30-31.
[137] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 11.
[138] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 9.
[139] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 7. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add. 2, para. 3 (b).
[140] See A/HRC/26/49/Add.1, para. 70. See also A/HRC/26/49/Add. 2, para. 3 (b).
[141] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 15.
[142] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 42-43. See also CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 40-41.
[143] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 14.
[144] Ibid., para. 16.
[145] Ibid., para. 22.
[146] Ibid., para. 17.
[147] Ibid., para. 23.
[148] Ibid., para. 6 (a).
[149] Ibid., para. 29.
[150] See country team submission, para. 36.
[151] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 42-43.
[152] See country team submission, para. 37.
[153] Ibid., para. 40.
[154] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 25.
[155] Ibid., para. 26.
[156] Ibid., para. 28. See also country team submission, para. 38.
[157] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 38-39. See also E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 28.
[158] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 38-39.
[159] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 27.
[160] Ibid., para. 30.
[161] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 34-35.
[162] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 6 (d).
[163] Ibid., para. 11.
[164] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 34-35.
[165] Ibid., paras. 34-35.
[166] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 30.
[167] See CEDAW/C/MRT/CO/2-3, paras. 34-35.
[168] See country team submission, para. 42.
[169] See UNHCR submission, p. 1.
[170] Ibid., p. 1.
[171] Ibid., p. 3.
[172] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 24.
[173] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 16.
[174] See country team submission, para. 45.
[175] See UNHCR submission, pp. 3-5.
[176] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 24.
[177] See country team submission, para. 44.
[178] Ibid., para. 44.
[179] See E/C.12/MRT/CO/1, para. 8.
[180] See A/HRC/27/53/Add.1, para. 45.
[181] See CAT/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 10.
[182] See CCPR/C/MRT/CO/1, para. 18.
[183] See country team submission, para. 50.
[184] Ibid., para. 51.

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Mauritania*

The present report is a summary of 20 stakeholders' submissions[1] to the universal periodic review. It follows the general guidelines adopted by the Human Rights Council in its decision 17/119. It does not contain any opinions, views or suggestions on the part of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), nor any judgement or determination in relation to specific claims. The information included herein has been systematically referenced in endnotes and, to the extent possible, the original texts have not been altered. As provided for in Human Rights Council resolution 16/21, where appropriate, a separate section is provided for contributions by the national human rights institution of the State under review that is accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles. The full texts of all submissions received are available on the OHCHR website. The report has been prepared taking into consideration the periodicity of the review and developments during that period.

* The present document was not edited before being sent to United Nations translation services.

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I. Information provided by the national human rights institution of the State under review accredited in full compliance with the Paris Principles

A. Background and framework

1. The National Human Rights Commission of Mauritania recommended that Mauritania should ratify the International Labour Organization (ILO) Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189).[2]

2. Recalling that Mauritania was a party to the nine international human rights conventions and to three optional protocols, the Commission noted that it was necessary to promote these conventions and to revise national laws to bring them into line with the State's international obligations.[3]

3. The Commission stated that it was urgent to revise the Criminal Code so that it would include definitions of rape and violence against women.[4]

4. The Commission recommended that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women should be incorporated into national law and that a campaign to disseminate the Personal Status Code should be organized thereafter.[5]

5. The Commission called for the adoption of a bill that had been drafted in 2008 in order to better deal with issues relating to migration and asylum.[6]

6. The Commission recommended a reform of the land law, emphasizing that legislation on that subject should help strengthen national unity and social cohesion.[7]

7. The Commission stated that the National Strategy to Institutionalize a Gender Approach and the drafting and implementation of the National Action Plan on Gender-based Violence (2015-2018) were too recent for their impact to be measured.[8]

8. The Commission stated that the establishment of the Tadamon National Agency for the Eradication of the Consequences of Slavery, for Social Integration and for Action to Fight Poverty and the adoption in 2014 of the road map for the eradication of the consequences of slavery were successful measures.[9] The Commission also considered that the conferral on it and on civil society organizations of the right to file claims for damages in criminal proceedings would increase the authorities' willingness to end this practice.[10]

B. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

9. The National Human Rights Commission continued to call for a standing invitation to be extended to the special procedures of the Human Rights Council.[11]

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations

10. The National Human Rights Commission recommended that the authorities take steps to enable all families to obtain civil identities for their children.[12]

11. The Commission welcomed the adoption of a national programme for the abandonment of the practice of female genital mutilation.[13]

12. The Commission deeply regretted that the impact of the Ministerial Decree on Domestic Labour had been diminished by a lack of communication, follow-up and social mobilization.[14]

13. The Commission stated that, in the past five years, more than 30 cases of slavery had been brought before the courts and that the perpetrators had been punished. However, the number of adjudicated cases fell below the targets set by the 2007 law.[15]

14. The Commission expressed concern at the low number of convictions and prosecutions for early marriage and forced marriage.[16]

15. The Commission stated that it was necessary to clarify the procedures and criteria for authorizing demonstrations and to ensure respect for civil liberties and the safety of citizens in order to strengthen freedom of expression.[17]

16. The Commission noted that, despite a reduction in the unemployment rate and an increase in the gross domestic product (GDP), the labour market still presented significant structural challenges, inasmuch as more than 86 per cent of economically active persons in the non-agricultural private sector continued to be engaged in the informal economy.[18]

17. The Commission stated that the public policy on persons with disabilities needed to be strengthened, especially with regard to employment and access to basic social services.[19]

II. Information provided by other stakeholders

A. Background and framework

1. Scope of international obligations[20]

18. Amnesty International (AI) reported that of the UPR recommendations made in 2010,[21] the Government ratified the OP-CAT, ICPPED, and CRPD.[22]

19. The Mauritanian Observatory for Human Rights and Democracy (OMADHD) recommended that Mauritania should ratify the optional protocols to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[23] the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, as well as the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.[24]

20. International Humanist and Ethical Union (IHEU) recommended that Mauritania remove its reservations to CEDAW.[25]

21. Open Doors (ODI) recommended that Mauritania lift its reservation to the ICCPR and CAT.[26]

2. Constitutional and legislative framework

22. Alkarama noted that no constitutional institution had been renewed within the statutory time limits. The parliamentary elections, initially scheduled for November 2011, continued to be postponed[27] and the senatorial elections set for March 2015, have been postponed indefinitely.[28] It added that Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz had his mandate extended in June 2014, after the elections had been widely boycotted by other political parties.[29]

23. Noting that the Constitution had been amended in 2012[30] and that the revision introduced a new article under which slavery and torture were qualified as "crimes against humanity", Alkarama recommended that Mauritania implement into domestic

law the new constitutional provisions [31] and define and criminalise torture in the Criminal Code. [32]

24. JS1 recommended that Mauritania introduce a law specifically prohibiting discrimination based on caste or ethnic slavery and assist the integration of victims of slavery into an independent life. [33]

25. Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) stated that the Constitution proclaims gender equality but neither defines discrimination nor specific crimes to which women are subjected to, such as rape. [34]

26. JS2 recommended that Mauritania should criminalize for rape [35] and JS3 recommended that legislation should be enacted to hold to account persons found guilty of rape and also the administrative, police and judicial authorities who showed a lax approach to rape cases. [36]

27. JS4 noted that the law on civil society organizations had still not been adopted and that that situation opened the door to violations of the right to assembly, freedom of association, freedom of opinion and the right to hold demonstrations. [37]

28. The Association mauritanienne pour la promotion du droit (Mauritanian Association for the Promotion of the Rule of Law) (AMAPROD) recommended that Mauritania should adopt the bill on asylum that was currently being prepared. [38]

29. AMAPROD recommended that Mauritania should adopt the decrees and implementing orders of the 2006 regulation on the protection of the rights of persons with disabilities. [39]

3. Institutional and human rights infrastructure and policy measures

30. Noting that despite its "A" status, the National Human Rights Commission was quicker to defend the positions held by the Government than it was to urge it to respect human rights, [40] JS2 recommended that Mauritania should amend the Commission's statutory mandate in order to allow it to assist persons in custody and those under examination from the moment of their arrest, and to exercise its independence in relation to the executive branch. [41]

31. Alkarama recommended that Mauritania bring the NHRI into conformity with the Paris Principles. [42]

32. Explaining that the effectiveness of the Office of the Ombudsman was diminished because victims could not refer matters to it and it lacked human and financial resources, JS2 recommended that Mauritania should reform the Office and provide it with additional resources. [43]

33. Noting that the roadmap to eradicate slavery contained 29 recommendations, notably that the 2007 law against slavery should be amended to include different forms of slavery, [44] AI recommended that Mauritania continue to implement the national programme to eradicate the legacy of slavery; expand public awareness campaigns against all forms of slavery [45] and abolish the caste system. [46]

34. JS4 noted that the road map to eradicate slavery did not include specific measures for the protection of victims, did not allow third parties to have standing before the courts [47] and continued to place the burden of proof on victims. [48]

35. JS4 recommended that Mauritania should provide the necessary means for implementing the road map; [49] provide human rights organizations with the material and legal means to have legal standing in cases of slavery that came to light; [50] and incorporate training on trafficking in persons in the regular training programmes for the police. [51]

36. Noting that the Tadamon Agency had undertaken a few activities but that their implementation was dependent on political ties,[52] OMADHD recommended that Mauritania should classify, in order of priority, those places where the Agency could intervene, and thus not leave this entirely to the discretion of mayors and other local authorities.[53]

37. JS2 recommended adopting legislation to prohibit child labour and to establish a compensation mechanism.[54]

38. JS4 noted that no evaluation had been carried out of the implementation of the action plan of the National Agency to Assist and Integrate Refugees and that repatriated persons regularly held demonstrations to protest their vulnerable situation.[55]

39. JS2 recommended that Mauritania should adopt without delay a national strategy to combat trafficking in persons, allow NGOs to conduct inquiries into human trafficking and impose penalties for crimes of trafficking in persons.[56]

B. Cooperation with human rights mechanisms

1. Cooperation with treaty bodies

40. AI reported that the Government had submitted overdue reports to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Human Rights Committee (HR Committee), Committee against Torture (CAT), and Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR).[57]

41. AI recommended that Mauritania submit all overdue reports to treaty bodies[58] and fully and effectively implement the recommendations of the HRC, CEDAW, CAT, CESCR and the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery.[59]

42. JS4 noted that Mauritania had in January 2015 set up a permanent, inter-agency technical committee to draft reports and follow up recommendations.[60]

2. Cooperation with special procedures

43. CIVICUS recommended that Mauritania extend a standing invitation to the Special Procedures,[61] particularly to the Special Rapporteurs[62] on Human Rights Defenders,[63] on Freedom of Expression, and on Freedom of Peaceful Assembly and Association.[64]

44. JS4 recommended that Mauritania extend an invitation to the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence.[65]

3. Cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

45. JS4 noted that following the visit in September 2013 of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, an action plan on that subject had been drawn up in cooperation with OHCHR, but that the development of the plan had remained at the stage of consultations.[66]

C. Implementation of international human rights obligations

1. Equality and non-discrimination

46. The Mauritanian Association for Human Rights (AMDH) stated that racial discrimination was rampant in Mauritania and that no definition of discrimination or penalty for it was prescribed in the Constitution or national legislation.[67]

47. AMDH noted that Mauritania had created a situation of de facto discrimination when it had made Arabic the sole official language, thereby precluding any promotion of Mauritanians who pursued their studies in French.[68]

48. AMDH recommended that Mauritania should enact an anti-discrimination law,[69] and AMAPROD recommended that racial discrimination should be criminalized and punished.[70]

49. JS1 stated that notwithstanding recommendations during Mauritania's previous UPR to eradicate all forms of discrimination,[71] no case of racial discrimination had ever been referred to national courts.[72]

50. JS1 noted that people in slavery or of slave descent had never been formally registered by the Government.[73]

51. According to AMDH, the census that had been under way since 2011 had had the effect of stripping many Mauritanians of their nationality.[74]

52. JS3 underscored the disparities that existed between men and women with regard to the transmission of nationality to their spouses and children[75] and with regard to access to rights.[76]

53. IHEU noted that non-Muslims were restricted from citizenship status and that Muslims who converted from Islam lost their citizenship and property rights.[77]

54. AMDH stated that, of all the persons who had returned to Mauritania following the events of 1989, only 6,000 had received their identity documents.[78]

2. Right to life, liberty and security of the person

55. AMDH noted that capital punishment still existed in Mauritania but that a moratorium had been in effect since 1987.[79] It added that death sentences were still being pronounced by the courts,[80] the most recent case being that of Mr. Mkhaitir, accused of apostasy.[81] MFWA explained that Mr. Mkhaitir had been sentenced to death in December 2014, for his article criticizing Mauritania's caste system and the way Muslims interpreted religion.[82]

56. AI recommended that Mauritania immediately and unconditionally release Mr. Mkhaïtir.[83]

57. The Advocates for Human Rights (AHR) explained that Mauritanian law mandated the death penalty in some cases, such as aggravated murder, murder, rape, adultery, apostasy, and homosexual acts.[84]

58. AHR recommended that Mauritania replace the death penalty with a sentence that respects international human rights standards[85] and impose a *de jure* moratorium on the death penalty, with a view toward its complete abolition.[86] It also recommended reducing the number of crimes punishable by death.[87]

59. AMDH stated that the prisoners who had been issued the death penalty for terrorist activities between 2008 and 2011 had been victims of enforced

disappearances and that some who had received lengthy sentences had died in prison without any clarification of the circumstances of their death.[88]

60. AI recommended that Mauritania open inquiries into all allegations of enforced disappearances and extrajudicial executions and bring to trial those responsible for these crimes.[89] Alkarama recommended ending all incommunicado detention, placing all persons deprived of their liberty under the protection of the law, and ensuring respect for their lives and integrity.[90]

61. AI stated that despite Mauritania's acceptance of the recommendation to end torture,[91] no prisoner appeared to be safe from torture and other ill-treatment.[92] It noted that the security forces use torture and ill-treatment to extract "confessions" from detainees[93] as well as for punishment in prison.[94]

62. AMDH recommended that Mauritania should disseminate information on the prohibition of torture, train government officials to apply the law[95] and lift the immunity of the police and gendarmerie in cases involving allegations of torture.[96] Alkarama recommended that Mauritania take concrete measures to investigate cases of torture, ensure that perpetrators are prosecuted[97] and strengthen complaint and compensation mechanisms for victims.[98]

63. Recalling that during its first review, Mauritania had accepted a recommendation on the creation of an independent mechanism for the monitoring of detention facilities,[99] Alkarama recommended that Mauritania establish an independent national preventive mechanism[100] and AI recommended that this latter fully comply with international standards.[101]

64. Noting that arbitrary detention remained standard practice[102] and that some persons acquitted by judicial proceedings or having served their prison sentence were kept in detention,[103] Alkarama recommended that Mauritania ensure that deprivations of liberty respect the guarantees offered by international law.[104]

65. Stating that no Mauritanian prison was in compliance with international standards, JS4 drew attention to severe overcrowding,[105] poor hygiene, inadequate diet[106] and prison guard violence.[107]

66. JS4 recommended that Mauritania should establish a fund for the purpose of bringing prisons into line with international standards[108] and that AMDH should allow civil society organizations completely unrestricted access to prisons.[109] AMAPROD recommended abolishing the practice of placing prisoners, especially Salafists,[110] in solitary confinement.

67. JS1 stated that despite several recommendations made during Mauritania's previous UPR to combat gender-based violence,[111] domestic violence and sexual aggression continued.[112] It added that Haratin women were at greater risk of violence both in the public and private spheres.[113] According to JS1, while the Government committed to criminalising violence against women in 2012, this is yet to come to fruition.[114]

68. JS2 stated that, since 2007, very few women rape victims had been recognized as such, and convictions of perpetrators were rare. JS2 added that the majority of judges placed acts of sexual aggression in the category of voluntary extramarital sexual relations, or *zina*, condemned by Sharia law.[115]

69. JS1 recommended that Mauritania ensure that female victims of slavery who have been raped are not deterred from pursuing cases against slave-owners based on fear of being charged with *zina*[116] and take measures to implement laws against FGM.[117]

70. JS1 noted that the adoption of a national strategy to promote the abandonment of FGM was positive steps.[118] However, according to IHEU, FGM/C continued to be a widely practiced phenomenon by all ethnic groups.[119]

71. Pointing out that FGM, early or forced marriage, polygamy, repudiation and force-feeding remained clandestine practices, OMADHD noted that it was important, in partnership with civil society, to carry out awareness-raising campaigns about the danger of such practices.[120]

72. JS1 stated that despite the prohibition of forced marriage and the fact that the age of marriage was set at 18 years old under the Personal Status Code, early marriage was still widely practised.[121]

73. JS3 recommended that Mauritania should enforce the provisions of the Personal Status Code[122] and respect the legal age of marriage — 18 years — for girls.[123]

74. Noting that since the first UPR, corporal punishment of children remained lawful in all settings;[124] Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children (GIEACPC) recommended that Mauritania clearly prohibit all corporal punishment of children in all settings.[125]

75. UNPO stated that a large number of children were enslaved, often from birth and were expected to work more than 14 hours a day, in domestic servitude, begging, herding and manual labour.[126]

76. JS3 recommended that Mauritania should remedy the fact that there was no national strategy to provide for children at risk, including Talibé children, whose working and living conditions could be equated with slavery-like practices.[127]

77. According to the Global Slavery Index, Mauritania has the highest prevalence of slavery in the world.[128] UNPO explained that slaves were not trafficked and were rarely bought or sold, but most of them inherited their status through their mothers and thus worked for the same families for generations.[129]

78. UNPO recommended that Mauritania allow an independent mission to collect detailed data on the nature and incidence of slavery to monitor efforts to eradicate slavery.[130]

79. IHEU recommended that Mauritania work with the international community and civil society in order to mainstream anti-slavery initiatives, and provide funding and technical expertise to help combat slavery and its "vestiges" as well as ensure the renewal of awareness-raising campaigns, involving religious leaders.[131]

3. Administration of justice, including impunity, and the rule of law

80. Recalling that during its previous UPR, numerous recommendations were made to Mauritania to ensure the comprehensive eradication of slavery,[132] JS1 stated that the police and the courts had hardly used the anti-slavery law.[133] It noted that in addition to the lack of judicial or political will to enforce the Act,[134] there were fundamental flaws in the law itself, such as the fact that it did not allow human rights organisations to bring complaints on behalf of victims of slavery.[135]

81. Society for Threatened People (STP) noted that it was common for the Prosecutor to file a claim for slavery under other less serious charges or to propose an informal settlement and that claims were left pending for months or years without explanation.[136] STP stated that the authorities had not only failed to enforce the Slavery Act, but there were often active attempts to prevent slavery cases from being reported.[137]

82. Noting that in 2014, 15 cases of alleged slavery had been brought before the courts, but were still under investigation;[138] AI recommended that Mauritania implement the 2007 anti-slavery law.[139]

83. AMAPROD recommended that Mauritania should review the law criminalizing slavery, in particular to allow civil society organizations to sue for damages in criminal cases involving slavery-like practices,[140] to strengthen the penalties for persons found guilty of slavery-like practices[141] and to increase the amounts awarded to victims as compensation.[142]

84. UNPO recommended carrying out training of the police, administrative and judicial authorities to ensure that they pursue cases of slavery efficiently.[143]

85. Noting that the right to a fair trial was practically non-existent,[144] AMDH recommended that the political authorities should respect the independence of the judiciary.[145]

86. AMAPROD recommended that Mauritania should provide judges, judicial personnel, directors of remand prisons, gendarmes and police officers with regular training in human rights.[146]

87. JS4 stated that victims and human rights organizations had in 1991 begun attempts to bring judicial proceedings against military defendants identified as perpetrators of crimes committed during the events of 1986-1992 but said that the courts had declined jurisdiction owing to the self-amnesty law of 1993.[147]

88. Pointing out that the attempt to resolve such pending humanitarian issues had not been consensual and that its legal framework had remained secret,[148] JS4 recommended that Mauritania should settle those issues by means of transitional justice mechanisms and should revoke the amnesty law of 1993, restore victims' rights and establish an independent commission of inquiry to shed light on the events.[149]

89. JS1 stated that no prosecutions had ever been initiated against the perpetrators of killings, plundering, deportations and torture committed against the black Mauritanian populations between 1989 and 1991.[150]

90. JS4 noted that the compensation paid to former officials and agents of the State who had been victims of the events of 1989 were inadequate and that many victims in other sectors of activity had received no compensation of any kind.[151]

91. AMAPROD recommended that Mauritania should accelerate the process for resolving the pending humanitarian issues by paying compensation to and legalizing the status of the civil servants and other public servants who had been victims of the events of 1989 and whose names had been officially recorded;[152] by settling disputes — especially those related to land rights — in an equitable fashion;[153] and by ensuring effective and available remedies for survivors of the military purges.[154]

92. Noting that corruption hindered economic development, exacerbated political instability and was a major obstacle to ensuring that disadvantaged segments of the population could exercise their rights, JS2 recommended that Mauritania should adopt bills criminalizing corruption.[155]

4. Right to privacy, marriage and family life

93. AMAPROD recommended that Mauritania should strengthen laws and regulations on the respect for privacy.[156]

5. Freedom of religion or belief, expression, association and peaceful assembly, and right to participate in public and political life

94. ODI stated that the Government limited freedom of religion by prohibiting the distribution of non-Islamic religious materials;[157] that apostasy was legally punishable by death[158] and that Muslims who converted to Christianity faced high social pressure and ostracism.[159]

95. ODI recommended that Mauritania end the practice of detaining, accusing and sentencing prisoners of conscience, including those held for alleged apostasy;[160] allow greater freedom of thought[161] and full freedom of religion or belief.[162]

96. Noting that there were currently eight prisoners of conscience in Mauritania;[163] AI recommended that Mauritania immediately and unconditionally release all of them.[164]

97. STP mentioned that in November 2014, Biram Dah Abeid, UN Human Rights Prize Laureate and presidential election runner, Brahim Ramdhane, Djiby Sow and seven other Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) had been arrested. Mr Abeid and Mr Ramdhane belong to the anti-slavery NGO Initiative for the Resurgence of the Abolitionist Movement (IRA).[165] UNPO explained that at the time of their arrest, the three HRD had been undertaking peaceful protests and awareness-raising activities.[166] CIVICUS mentioned that in 2015, Abeid, Ramdhane and Sow had been sentenced to two years of imprisonment[167] and AI recommended that Mauritania release them.[168]

98. Noting that there were reports that some of the imprisoned IRA members suffered acts of torture,[169] FLD recommended that Mauritania investigate these allegations and take urgent measures to prevent torture.[170] AI stated that HRDs and other activists faced harassment and intimidation including death threats and that police and judicial authorities had failed to bring the perpetrators of such acts to justice.[171]

99. STP recommended that Mauritania uphold international law as it relates to the rights of HRDs and to combatting slavery.[172] JS1 recommended adhering to commitments to support civil society action against slavery made under the roadmap to end slavery.[173]

100. CIVICUS stated that while the state and security forces were the main perpetrators of violations of the rights of HRDs, religious leaders also threatened them and had on occasion; called on communities to attack and harm them.[174]

101. MFWA stated that police and security forces had brutally silenced anti-slavery activists by violently dispersing demonstrations; arresting and detaining protesters and also attacking and arresting journalists covering issues on slavery.[175]

102. AI recommended that Mauritania ensure that journalists, HRDs and other civil society activists are able to carry out their legitimate activities without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or pressure.[176] CIVICUS recommended that Mauritania release all civil society activists currently in prison; investigate all threats to HRDs and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice; and condemn calls by religious leaders to harm human rights defenders.[177] FLD recommended starting a dialogue with religious leaders with a view to ensure that fatwas issued against HRDs are withdrawn.[178] MFWA recommended that Mauritania develop and implement national guidelines for police and security forces prohibiting violence against those exercising the right to freedom of expression.[179]

103. MFWA noted that while plurality of views among media outlets existed,[180] and that the Press Freedom Law had been amended, decriminalising slander and defamation,[181] journalists had practiced self-censorship in covering controversial or

sensitive issues, particularly those concerning the Government, military, slavery, and Sharia law.[182]

104. CIVICUS recommended that Mauritania investigate threats to journalists and representatives of the media and condemn attacks on and threats to journalists.[183]

105. FLD noted that the exercise of the rights of assembly and association had been limited in practice.[184] It explained that registration was required by law, but there had been reports of registration being denied and in some cases,[185] applicant organisations had not obtained registration after five years, such as IRA.[186]

106. AMAPROD recommended that Mauritania should amend the law on associations so as to waive the requirement to obtain prior governmental authorization for the establishment of associations.[187]

107. MFWA reported that the National Assembly had adopted a new media bill, liberalising the airwaves and insulating state-owned media from governmental control.[188]

108. Welcoming the establishment of quotas of 20 percent for women in decision-making positions in public administration,[189] JS1 stated that the quota system had done nothing to address the particular discrimination faced by Haratin women.[190]

109. JS3 recommended that Mauritania should generally apply the quota for women in elected positions, raise the quota and develop springboards for their access to other decision-making positions.[191]

6. Right to work and to just and favourable conditions of work

110. UNPO explained that slaves performed household chores and work in subsistence agriculture or herding. It noted that their masters kept them untrained in specific skills or tasks, and uneducated, so that they would have no possibilities to survive if freed.[192]

111. JS4 noted that there was serious indirect discrimination against women in employment and in high-level administrative posts.[193]

7. Right to social security and to an adequate standard of living

112. OMADHD remarked that the Government had intensified programmes designed to eliminate poverty so as to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including specifically support for women's cooperatives, Emel boutiques, the Tadamon Agency and the free distribution of staple foods.[194]

113. JS3 recommended improving women's access to credit and providing them with an adequate social protection scheme.[195]

114. JS4 recommended that Mauritania should open education and learning centres for at-risk children and set up a solidarity fund and food bank for children with disabilities and child victims of sexual abuse.[196]

8. Right to education

115. JS4 pointed out that there was little public awareness of the law on compulsory schooling.[197] According to official figures, the gross primary school enrolment rate was 96 per cent in 2011 and included a higher number of girls,[198] but female students were clearly in the minority in higher education.[199]

116. JS4 stated that there was one kind of school for the rich and another kind for the poor, and that the education received depended on the community: Arabs were taught in Arabic and black Mauritanians were taught in French.[200]

117. JS4 recommended that Mauritania should declare all national languages as official and promote them as languages of instruction and employment.[201]

118. OMADHD explained that education remained an ongoing challenge, namely because of economic, safety-related and geographic reasons and issues related to the quality of teachers.[202]

119. OMADHD recommended that Mauritania should continue efforts to ensure access to preschool education throughout the country,[203] to build large schools in each commune, to make the schools safer and to train teachers.[204] JS3 recommended that human rights education should be promoted in schools.[205]

120. JS1 recommended that Mauritania adopt policies to facilitate equal access to education and employment opportunities for those of slave-descent.[206]

9. Minorities and indigenous peoples

121. UNPO noted that the Haratins constituted the largest ethnic component in Mauritania,[207] but remained the most economically and politically marginalized group.[208]

122. UNPO stated that the Haratin were subject to economic dependency toward their masters, making their emancipation more difficult. They face discrimination[209] in education,[210] employment, bank loans, healthcare and land attribution.[211] Furthermore, they lacked proper representation in decision-making bodies and were absent from the media. UNPO added that even when slaves were formally "set free"; they often did not have the skills or knowledge necessary to find a job.[212]

123. JS1 recommended that Mauritania promote a higher representation of minorities in the public institutions.[213]

124. UNPO noted that enslaved Haratin women were subjected to forced marriages, lacked control over their fertility and suffered from sexual abuse, rape and sexual exploitation.[214]

125. According to UNPO, as the Haratins are not recognized as a minority group, they cannot enjoy the rights to which minorities are entitled, such as the rights to their own culture, religion and language.[215]

10. Migrants, refugees and asylum seekers

126. JS4 noted that the authorities had expressed satisfaction with their success in repatriating 24,536 persons to Mauritania between 2008 and 2012 but added that there were still some 26,000 refugees in neighbouring countries.[216]

11. Human rights and counter-terrorism

127. Alkarama noted that in 2010, the Parliament had adopted a new anti-terrorism law that contradicted the Constitution. It stated that article 3 was imprecise, defining acts of terrorism that could include facts or offences unrelated to terrorism and criminalise legitimate activities of political opponents and HRD.[217]

128. Alkarama noted that charges of terrorism often lead to violations of human rights, creating a framework for arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detentions or torture. As such, 14 persons convicted of acts of terrorism on the basis of the 2010 law, were forcibly disappeared in May 2011.[218]

129. Alkarama recommended that Mauritania amend the 2010 anti-terrorism law and bring it in conformity with the principles and guarantees of international law.[219]

Notes

[1] The stakeholders listed below have contributed information for this summary; the full texts of all original submissions are available at: www.ohchr.org. One asterisk denotes a national human rights institutions with "A" status.

Civil society

Individual submissions:

AI	Amnesty International, London, United Kingdom;
AHR	Advocates for Human Rights, Minneapolis, United States;
ALKARAMA	Alkarama, Geneva, Switzerland;
AMAPROD	Association mauritanienne pour la Promotion du Droit, Nouakchott, Mauritania;
AMDH	Association mauritanienne des Droits de l'Homme, Nouakchott, Mauritania;
APDHM	Action pour la Protection des Droits de l'Homme en Mauritanie, Nouakchott, Mauritania;
CIVICUS	World Alliance for Citizen Participation;
FLD	Front Line Defenders, The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, Dublin, Ireland;
GIEACPC	Global Initiative to End All Corporal Punishment of Children, London, United Kingdom;
IHEU	International Humanist and Ethical Union, London, United Kingdom;
MFWA	Media Foundation for West Africa, Accra, Ghana;
ODI	Open Doors, Ermelo, Netherlands;
OMADHD	Observatoire mauritanien des Droits de l'Homme et de la Démocratie, Nouakchott, Mauritania;
STP	Society for Threatened Peoples, Göttingen, Germany;
UNPO	Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), Brussels, Belgium.

Joint submissions:

JS1	Joint submission 1 submitted by: Anti-Slavery International, Minority Rights Group International (MRG), SOS-Esclaves and L'Initiative pour la Résurgence du Mouvement Abolitionniste (IRA), London, United Kingdom.
JS2	Joint submission 2 submitted by: Association Transparence et Développement (ATED), Agir pour le Bien-être des Enfants, Personnes âgées et déficientes (ABEPAD), Réseau Unité pour le Développement et l'Appui des Jeunes en matière des Droits de l'Homme, Association de Lutte contre la Dépendance (ALCD), Nouakchott, Mauritania;
JS3	Joint submission 3 submitted by: Collectif pour la Défense des Droits de la Femme en Mauritanie (CDDFM), Nouakchott;
JS4	Joint submission 4 submitted by: Association pour la Défense des Enfants en déperdition (ADE), Association mauritanienne d'Aide aux Nécessiteux (AMANE), Association mauritanienne pour la Santé de la Mère et de l'Enfant (AMSME), Action pour la Protection des Droits de l'Homme en Mauritanie (APDHM), Coordination des Organisations des Victimes de la Répression (COVIRE), Forum des Organisation nationales des Droits de l'Homme (FONADH), Institut Mariem Diallo pour l'Enfance difficile en Mauritanie (IMD), Réseau Ensemble contre la Torture en Mauritanie (RECT-MR), Groupe des Organisations de Concertation et de Lutte pour les Droits de Femmes en Mauritanie (GCDF), Nouakchott, Mauritania.

National human rights institution(s):

NHRC	Commission nationale des Droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie*, Nouakchott, Mauritania.

[2] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 27.
[3] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 6.
[4] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 7.
[5] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 25.
[6] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 33.
[7] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 37.
[8] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 10.
[9] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 4.
[10] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 15.
[11] See A/HRC/16/17, recommandation 92.16, Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 8.
[12] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 28.
[13] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 24.
[14] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 27.
[15] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 14.
[16] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 18.

[17] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 29.
[18] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 35.
[19] Rapport parallèle de la Commission Nationale des droits de l'Homme de Mauritanie, para. 13.
[20] The following abbreviations have been used in the present document:

ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
CAT	Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
OP-CAT	Optional Protocol to CAT
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ICPPED	International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance

[21] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendations 92.1 (France), 92.2 (France), 92.3 (Spain), 92.5 (Côte d'Ivoire), 92.6 (Switzerland), 92.9 (Turkey) and 92.10 (Argentina).
[22] See also Alkarama, para. 8; JS3, para. C and JS4, paras 30 and 36.
[23] See also AI, p. 6 and JS4, para. 74.
[24] OMADHD, para. V.
[25] IHEU, para. 4.4.
[26] ODI, para. 27.
[27] Alkarama, para. 4.
[28] Alkarama, para. 5.
[29] Alkarama, para. 7.
[30] Alkarama, para. 11.
[31] Alkarama, paras. 14 (a) and 29. See also AMAPROD, paras 4.3, 8 and 4.3, 10 and AI, p. 2.
[32] Alkarama, para. 32 (a). See also AI, p. 5, JS4, para. 12 and AMAPROD, para. 4.3, 1.
[33] JS1, para. xii.
[34] UNPO, p. 7.
[35] JS2, para. IV.
[36] JS3, p. 3.
[37] JS4, para. 20.
[38] AMAPROD, para. 5, p. 3.
[39] AMAPROD, para. 1, p. 9.
[40] JS2, para. I. See also JS4, para. XII.
[41] JS2, para. XII. See also Alkarama, paras. 17 and 18.
[42] Alkarama, para. 19.
[43] JS2, para. I.
[44] AI, p. 2.
[45] See also UNPO, para. III.3 and JS1, para. x.
[46] AI, p. 5.
[47] See also JS1, paras. 35-36.
[48] JS4, para. 26. See also JS1, para. vi.
[49] See also UNPO, para. III.1 and JS1, para. xviii.
[50] See also UNPO, para. III, 4.
[51] JS4, para. 54.
[52] OMADHD, p. 3. See also JS4, para. 28.
[53] OMADHD, para. IX.
[54] JS2, para. III.
[55] JS4, para. 33.
[56] JS2, para. VIII.
[57] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendation 90.15, Alkarama, para. 20. See also AMAPROD, para. 4.3, 7.
[58] See also Alkarama, para. 23 (a).
[59] AI, p. 5. See also Alkarama, paras. 9 (a) and (b).
[60] JS4, para. 17.
[61] See also AI, p. 5.
[62] See also ODI, para. 31.
[63] See also STP, para. 9.
[64] CIVICUS, para. 5.4. See also AI, p. 5.
[65] JS4, para. 71.
[66] JS4, para. 35.
[67] AMDH, para. VII.
[68] AMDH, para. VII.
[69] AMDH, para. VII. See also IHEU, para. 4.4.
[70] AMAPROD, para. 4.3, 6.
[71] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendations 92.21 (Brazil), 92.22 (Israel), 92.35 (Israel) and 92.38.

(Ecuador).
[72] JS1, para. 14.
[73] JS1, para.17.
[74] AMDH, para. VI.
[75] JS3, p. 2.
[76] JS3, p. 3. See also IHEU, para. 4.1 and JS2, para. III.
[77] IHEU, para. 3.2.
[78] AMDH, para. VI.
[79] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendation 93.30, AI, p. 4.
[80] See also JS4, para. 72.
[81] AMDH, p. 1. See also AI, p. 3, AHR, para. 4, Alkarama, para. 24, IHEU, para. 3.2, ODI, para. 8, JS1, para. 42 and JS4, para. 73.
[82] MFWA, para. 26. See also AI, p. 3, AMDH, para. IV.4, ODI, para. 8, UNPO, pp. 8-9 and JS1, para. 42.
[83] AI, p. 6. See also MFWA, p. 9 and IHEU, para. 3.2.
[84] AHR, para. 3. See also AHR, para. 8.
[85] AHR, para. 13. See also AI, p. 6 and JS2, para. X.
[86] AHR, para. 14. See also OMADH, p. 9 , AI, p. 6 and JS2, para. X.
[87] AHR, para. 15.
[88] AMDH, p. 1. AI, p. 4. See also Alkarama, para. 25.
[89] AI, p. 6.
[90] Alkarama, para. 26 (a).
[91] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendation 90.33.
[92] AI, p. 2. See also AI, p. 3, AMDH, para. II and IHEU, p. 2.
[93] See also AMDH, para. II and JS3, para. C.
[94] AI, p. 2.
[95] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendation 91.13, MFWA, para. 30.
[96] AMDH, p. 2.
[97] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendations 90.33 and 90.35, MFWA, para. 33. See also AI, p. 5 and AMAPROD, para. 11.
[98] Alkarama, para. 32 (b). See also AI, p. 5 and JS4, para. 60.
[99] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendation 92.1, Alkarama, para. 15.
[100] Alkarama, para. 19. See also AMAPROD, para. 4.3, 25 and JS4, paras 14 and 60.
[101] AI, p. 5.
[102] Alkarama, pars. 33. See also JS3, para. C and JS4, para. 55 (iv).
[103] Alkarama, para. 34. See also JS2, para. IX.
[104] Alkarama, para. 36 (a).
[105] JS4, para. 57. See also APDHM, para. B , Alkarama, para. 31 , JS2, para IX and JS3, para. C.
[106] See also Alkarama, para. 31 and JS2, para. IX.
[107] JS4, para. 59.
[108] JS4, para. 60. See also AI, p. 6, AHR, para. 16, Alkarama, para. 32 c), AMAPROD, para. 23, p. 6 and paras. 4-12, pp. 6-7, JS2, para. IX and JS3, para. C.
[109] AMDH, para. I. See also Alkarama, para. 31, AMAPROD, para. 4.3, 14-20 , APDHM, paras 2-4 and JS3, para. C.
[110] AMAPROD, para. 7, p. 7.
[111] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendations 90.9 (Spain), 90.11 (Malaysia), 90.25 (Senegal), 90.26 (Argentina), 90.27 (Argentina), 90.28 (Mexico), 90.29 (Poland), 90.30 (United Kingdom), 90.31 (Norway) and 90.32 (Azerbaijan).
[112] See also JS4, paras. 39-42.
[113] JS1, para. 24. UNPO, p. 6.
[114] JS1, para. 25.
[115] JS2, p. 3. See also AI, p. 4.
[116] JS1, para. iv.
[117] JS1, para. xvi. See also IHEU, para. 4.4, JS2, para. III, JS4, para. 24 and UNPO, p. 11.
[118] JS1, para. 28.
[119] IHEU, para. 4.4.
[120] OMADHD, p. 3.
[121] JS1, para.26. See also IHEU, para. 4.2.
[122] JS3, p. 3. See also JS2, para. III.
[123] JS3, p. 4. See also UNPO, para. 11, IHEU, para. 4.4 and JS3, para. D.
[124] GIEACPC, para. 1.2. See also JS2, para. V and JS4, para. 46.
[125] GIEACPC, Introduction. See also JS2, para V.

[126] UNPO, p. 7. See also JS1, paras 29-31.
[127] JS3, p. 4.
[128] IHEU, para. 1. See also UNPO, pp. 4-5.
[129] UNPO, p. 5.
[130] UNPO, par. III.3. See also JS1, para. 34.
[131] IHEU, para. 1.
[132] See A/HRC/16/17, recommendations 90.10 (Ghana), 90.14 (United States), 90.36 (Spain), 90.37 (Nigeria), 90.38 (Pakistan), 90.39 (United States), 90.40 (Germany), 90.41 (Syrian Arab Republic), 90.42 (Slovakia), 90.43 (Norway), 90.44 (Holy See), 90.45 (Switzerland), 90.48 (Burkina Faso), 92.35 (Israel) and 92.38 (Ecuador).
[133] See also STP, para. 3 and UNPO, p. 5.
[134] See also AMDH, para. III, JS1, paras. 5-6 and JS4, paras 52-53.
[135] JS1, para. 13. See also JS1, para. 4, AMDH, para. III ; STP, para. 1 and UNPO, p. 5.
[136] STP, para. 2. See also AI, p. 1 and JS1, paras. 8-13.
[137] STP, para. 4. See also Alkarama, p. 48, AMDH, para. III, JS4, para. 10; AI, p. 2 and JS1, paras. 7 and 11.
[138] AI, p. 1.
[139] AI, p. 5. See also STP, para. 9 and FLD, para. 22.c.
[140] AMAPROD, para. 4.3.2. See also UNPO, p. 11 and JS1, para. v.
[141] AMAPROD, para. 4.3, 3. See also Js1, para. ii, vii and viii and UNPO, para. III, 6.
[142] AMAPROD, para. 4.3, 4. See also AMDH, para. III and AI, p. 5.
[143] UNPO, para. III, 3. See also JS2, para. VII.
[144] See also AMDH, para. I.
[145] AMDH, para. IV. See also CIVICUS, para. 5.1.
[146] AMAPROD, para. p. 6. See also AMAPROD, para. 22, p. 6.
[147] JS4, para. 65. See also JS4, para. 70.
[148] JS4, para. 66.
[149] JS4, para. 71.
[150] JS1, para. 18.
[151] JS4, para. 62.
[152] AMAPROD, para. 2, p. 2.
[153] AMAPROD, para. 3, pp. 2-3.
[154] AMAPROD, para. 4, p. 3.
[155] JS2, para. XII.
[156] AMAPROD, para 10, p. 9.
[157] ODI, para. 14. See also IHEU, para. 3.2.
[158] ODI, para. 8. See also IHEU, para. 3.1.
[159] ODI, para. 17.
[160] ODI, para. 24.
[161] ODI, para. 25.
[162] ODI, para. 28. See also ODI, paras. 29-30; AI, p. 6, IHEU, para. 3.2 and JS1, para. xi.
[163] AI, p. 3.
[164] AI, p. 6.
[165] STP, para. 6. See also, AI, p. 3, Alkarama, para. 40, FDL, para. 9, MFWA, para. 52, UNPO, pp. 4 and 8 and JS1, para. 40.
[166] UNPO, p. 4.
[167] CIVICUS, para. 3.2. See also AI, p. 3, AMDH, para. IV.4, FDL, para. 10, MFWA, para. 53; STP, paras 7-8, UNPO, p. 9, JS1, para. 41 and JS4, para. 51.
[168] AI, p. 6.
[169] FDL, para. 11. See also AMDH, para. II.
[170] FDL, para. 22 (h).
[171] AI, p. 4. See also, FDL, para. 6.
[172] STP, para. 9. See also IHEU, para. 2.
[173] JS1, para. xi.
[174] CIVICUS, para. 2.1. See also CIVICUS, para. 2.2, IHEU, para. 3.2 and FLD, paras. 14-17.
[175] MFWA, para. 47. See also MFWA, paras. 16-25, 32, 34-44, 51, CIVICUS, paras. 1.3, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4, FLD, paras. 1, 12, 13 and 18, Alkarama, para. 38 and UNPO, p. 10.
[176] AI, p. 6. See also CIVICUS, para. 5.2, Alkarama, paras 42a) and 42c) and FDL, para. 22fa.
[177] CIVICUS, para. 5.1. See also FLD, para. 22 (b).
[178] FLD, para. 22 (f).
[179] MFWA, p. 9. See also CIVICUS, para. 5.2 and FLD, para. 22 (b).
[180] See also AMAPROD, paras 4.5, 4 and 5.

[181] MFWA, para. 5.
[182] MFWA, para. 11. See also CIVICUS, para. 1.5 and FLD, para. 1.
[183] CIVICUS, para. 5.3.
[184] FLD, para. 3. See also JS2, para. 1.
[185] See also MFWA, para. 45.
[186] FLD, para. 4. See also AMDH, para. V, CIVICUS, para. 1.6, IHEU, para. 2 and STP, para. 8.
[187] AMAPROD, para. 4.5, 2.
[188] MFWA, para. 8. See also MFWA, para. 9.
[189] See also JS4, para. 49.
[190] JS1, para. 23.
[191] JS3, p.3. See also AMAPROD, para. 1, p. 9.
[192] UNPO, p. 6. See also JS1, para. 22.
[193] JS4, para. 47.
[194] OMADHD, p. 4.
[195] JS3, p. 3.
[196] JS4, para. 50.
[197] JS4, para. 43.
[198] JS4, para. 44.
[199] JS4, para. 45.
[200] JS4, para. 69.
[201] JS4, para. 71.
[202] OMADHD, p. 2. See also JS2, para. XI and JS3, para. D.
[203] See also JS3, para. D.
[204] OMADHD, para. II. See also JS2, para. X and JS3, para. D.
[205] JS3, para. D.
[206] JS1, para. viii.
[207] UNPO, p. 3.
[208] UNPO, p. 3.
[209] See also JS1, paras 2, 3 and 20.
[210] See also JS1, para. 16.
[211] See also JS1, para. 15.
[212] UNPO, p.4. See also UNPO, pp. 7 and 8 and JS1, paras 16 and 32.
[213] JS1, para. xiv. See also UNPO, para. III, 7.
[214] UNPO, p. 6. See also JS1, para. 27.
[215] UNPO, p. 8.
[216] JS4, para. 61.
[217] Alkarama, para. 43.
[218] Alkarama, para. 44. See also AI, p. 4 and JS4, para. 55.
[219] Alkarama, para. 45 (a).